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J326/1 Pt 4

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For Cross References see inside of Cover

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

MIDDLE EAST

PERSIAN GULF

Threat to the Persian Gulf

D

CLOSED 1968.

Folio's 155 — 195

Dates 26.10.67 — 28.5.68

continued in Pt 5.

J326/1Pt4

(8969) 5515/6107 2M 8/64 P.I. Gp. 610

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First Review J.326/1 Pt 4

This file has now passed out of active use. Under the Public Records Act 1958, it must be reviewed within five years to determine whether it should be destroyed or retained for departmental use.

This file should accordingly be -

~~a. destroyed on 31.12.19... or~~

b. retained for administrative purposes for 25 years.

Signature Henry Emmett
JK

Date 28 MARCH 1972

Notes

1. Where the file has only short-term usefulness (ie extending to at most five years) it should be marked at (a) for destruction at a pre-determined time when it is judged likely to have ceased to be of any further use to the Department.

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C18.1.71

CLOSED 1968.

Folios 155 — 195

Dates 26.10.67 — 29.5.68.

Continued in Pt. 5.

FOLIO 195a

MINISTRY OF POWER

PETROLEUM DIVISION

Thames House South, Millbank, LONDON S.W.1

Telephone: Abbey 7000 ~~Ext. 1081~~

Our reference:

29th May, 1968.

Your reference:

CABINET OFFICE
-9 DEC 1968
FILING INSTRUCTIONS
FILE No. 32611

Dear Hal,

SECRET

JIC (68) 24 (Draft) does get us further on the way to gauging the consequences of the West threat in the Gulf and illuminates the less important possibilities in that area. Unfortunately it does not yet enable us to calculate what measures we should take in anticipation of troubles in the Gulf.

In the Working Party on the Security of Oil Supplies (S.O.S.) our main concern has been to estimate what hypothetical interruptions we should insure against and the amount of stocks necessary to meet such interruptions. For the latter calculation we employ a committee of BP and Shell who have, of course, a far more detailed knowledge than ourselves of conditions in the various oilfields and of tanker capacity. But we have to feed in the assumptions about the extent and duration of the interruption. We were looking to JIC to give us guidance on these assumptions.

Unfortunately JIC (68) 24 does not yet enable us to form these assumptions and I hope you can redraft your conclusions (and the supporting paragraphs) so that we can form them. Since defence against the worst possible interruptions more than suffices against lesser interruptions, I am concerned here only with an armed conflict between Iran and the Arabs. I would like to be able to ask the Companies to calculate how much stock would be needed to meet the shortfall in oil if so many terminals in the Gulf were destroyed and it was so many weeks before the oil companies could enter the area to start repair work.

As I read JIC (68) 24 (Draft) and JIC (68) 35 (Working Draft) it is as likely as not that there will be some armed conflict between Iran and the Arabs accompanying or following our withdrawal. There is a fair possibility that this conflict will involve strikes against Arab and Iranian oil terminals, and by 1971 the military capabilities of the opposing forces will be such that the strikes would succeed. There is a significant possibility (and "significant" gets its meaning from the fact that the cost to the economy of a shortage of oil may be about a hundred times as great as the annual cost of stocking to meet such a shortage) that Iraq, Kuwait and the Sheikdoms would be involved in such a conflict and that the export terminals in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, theNeutral Zone, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia (I omit Oman - perhaps Qatar also is unlikely to be come involved ?) will be destroyed. But such a conflict is unlikely to last more than a month (?) at the end of which the oil companies will be able to start repair work. The conflict might be accompanied by an interruption of Tapline, either deliberately - in which case it would be unlikely to last more than a month - or because of damage from Iranian attacks, though the damage would probably not be very extensive. The flow from Northern Iraq might also be interrupted - but the interruption would be most

/unlikely

H.J.H. Maud, Esq.,
Cabinet Office,
Whitehall,
London, S.W. 1.

unlikely to exceed three months. The chances of a simultaneous interruption of North African oil in sympathy with the Arab cause against Iran are too small to merit consideration.

If you could reformulate your conclusions along such lines (with, of course, whatever JIC thinks the appropriate periods and judgments) it would enable me to calculate, with the oil companies, the consequences for oil of an Arab-Iranian conflict. Even if you feel able now only to go some way along these lines, I might be able to formulate alternative hypotheses on which the companies could work and we could later decide which hypothesis was sufficiently probable to justify insuring against. It would also be useful if you could give some indication of the date when such a conflict might be expected.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Terence Garvey, who has represented the Foreign Office at S.O.S. I may be sending you some minor comments later.

Yours sincerely,
Sydney Fremantle

S.W.Fremantle

SECRET

FOLIO 194

A 5862.

Century House,
London, S.E.1.

8/JIC/4100

JIC Reg.

10th May, 1968.

RECEIVED
13 MAY 1968 (1)
J. I. C. (A)

Mr. D. J. Fewtrell,
J.I.C. Secretariat.

Subversive Activity in the Persian Gulf

Circulated as First Prof to JIC(68)30(D).

JIC(68) 30 (Draft)

191.

Thank you for your letter J/326/1 of 1st May, and the attached comments on the paper. Herewith now is a copy of the amendments suggested by us in the light of these comments and of information which has become available recently.

2. With reference to DI 4's complaint about only receiving one copy, we suggest that they be asked how many they would have liked so that if the 30 copies which we supplied are not sufficient more can be produced if required.

3. Our draft of the Appendix of Leading Personalities is still being amended by our representative in Bahrain and is, therefore, not yet available. It will be sent just as soon as it is ready, but we would not wish to delay issuing the paper, the text of which must already be slightly out-of-date, on account of the Appendix.

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

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S/F

191.

1st May 1968

J/326/1

Subversive Activity in the Persian Gulf
(JIC(68) 30 (Draft))

I attach the comments, including those from JIC (Gulf), I have received on the above draft report.

2. If you will let me have a consolidated list of your proposed amendments I will circulate it for Departmental approval. If it is at all possible it would be convenient to circulate the Appendix of Leading Personalities (referred to in paragraph 3 of your letter S/JIC/4082 dated 28th March) at the same time.

D.J. FEWTRELL

Miss E.G. Trubody
Room 405
Century House

SECRET

Attachment to J/326/1

DEPARTMENTAL COMMENTS ON JIC(68) 30 (DRAFT)

1. Foreign Office Comments

Paragraph 111

The NLF resolutions at Zirgibar on 10th March offered specific support to revolutionary movements in Arabia and the Gulf. This may represent an intention rather than an immediate capability but President Qahtan al-Straabi has probably reaffirmed the Zirgibar resolutions in toto. I think the first sentence should therefore read something like:

"Although the Government of the PRSY has publically stated its support for revolutionary movements in Arabia and the Gulf there is no evidence that they have yet provided or, for that matter, they are in a position to provide any assistance to subversive movements in the Gulf except for the D.L.F."

2. Ministry of Defence (D.I.4) Comments

(a) It is a pity that such a short time has been allowed for comment on this obviously interesting and useful document of which we had only one copy. As it comprises 38 typed foolscap pages and ought to be read by six desk officers plus at least two heads of sections, over and above all the other equally pressing and urgent work in hand, it has meant that we have not been able to give it the detailed attention it clearly merits and it has received only a superficial glance.

(b) It is a very long paper but it contains a good deal of useful background. It assesses the current effectiveness and possible development of subversive elements in the Gulf and lists the support given by outside agencies.

(c) The overall picture portrayed is one of divergent or non-existent aims and leadership and of very slow development except, that is, in Bahrain where the chances of really viable organizations getting support from the greater, potentially dissident field seem much stronger. The increase of Ba'athism and Syria's influence is stressed in the Bahrain (pp 12 - 14) and Syrian (p. 34) sections.

/(d)

(d) In the Muscat and Oman section (p. 21 et seq), both in Para 68 and in Para 96 (Iraqi support) the existence of "guerilla warfare" maybe rather over-stating the case? In para 72 the assistance given by PRSY could be more clearly defined. It has consisted of

(i) propaganda through Aden

(ii) announced willingness to make contacts and to harbour a DLF mission in Hauf.

This is, in fact, only displaying overtly what has been going on covertly since 1965 and to say that Dhofar is now "the most troubled and vulnerable area in the Gulf" again seems rather to be over-stating the case. It gives the impression also that the DLFs efforts have the upper hand and are dominating SAF which is, in fact, far from the case. It is for consideration whether Bahrain itself is not more vulnerable.

3. Joint Intelligence Staff (Gulf) Comments

Serial 1: Para 5. This does not really follow on from para 4. If the Dhofaris are as independent as we believe (and as para 4 states), that very independence should act as a bar to the spread of any pan-arab revolution.

2: Para 8 Line 13. We believe the take over bid was 'pushed' by UAR.

3: Para 19. I know the names change rapidly but I thought the FNF was the NSF (National Strong Front).

4: Para 38 last sentence. Wrong tense. Did it come off?

5: Para 47 penultimate sentence. Is it really correct to describe POLO and GLF as "of some significance". I thought POLO was a dead duck and the GLF of some insignificance.

6: Para 53. Far too much space is devoted to the GLF (3 pages), giving it an importance that it does not merit.

7: The PLO deserves a mention in the Trucial States section.

8: Para 57. Misleading. Dubai riots were largely instigated by expatriates.

9: Para 66.

(a) 3rd sentence. Not true - real significance is the annual exodus of young men up the Gulf where they get regular pay packets and learn modern ideas.

(b) 4th sentence. There is no evidence of any hostility to Western interests.

/10:

Serial 10: Para 71. It is probably inaccurate to say Bin Nufl is still the leader of the Bait Kathir. This para should also mention the gradual withdrawal of the Bait Kathir.

11: Para 72 3rd sentence. This is no longer true. The DLF have received such a bloody nose from SAF that they are now almost inactive.

Para 73 last sentence. I think this sentence is misleading. There is little merit in comparing the DLF with the nationalist organisations. The only legitimate comparison is with the ORM.

12: Para 94 line 3. Is 'ordnance base' an accepted description of an arsenal? Is this what it means?

13: Para 104, 105.

(a) By USSR, I take it the authors mean USSR and the Eastern bloc.

(b) Do not those two paragraphs play down the Communist influence. I thought that we had evidence of Eastern bloc support for the NLF?

14: Para 102. China is known to have sent arms to the extreme left wing in the Hadramaut. This could tie up with aid to the DLF. Ghassanis visit to Peking.

15: Para 110 last sentence. This has not been confirmed.

SECRET

JIC (Gulf) Comments (Additional to those from JIS (Gulf)

Owing to more urgent local problems, JIC have not had time to clear JIC(68)30(DRAFT). JIS comments were sent to D14 Alexander in DO letter dated 23rd April 1968 and Residency are generally in agreement with these comments. The paper is also felt to be overlong and repetitive, e.g. para 84 repeats paras 52-54, Para 86 similar to Para 60, Para 88 and Para 34. The following extra comments refer to JIS comments: (a) serial 1. DLF is Anti-Sultan and therefore sympathetic to anti-Sheikhly movements. DLF would not necessarily adopt and spread revolutionary socialist ideology as the NLF in PRSY have done. (b) Serial 3. We are not certain what the correct name is. It may be Front of National Strength. (c) Serial 7. Also add Qatar. (d) Serial 8. This sentence is incorrect. They are not badly paid and they do not constitute a serious security threat in the security forces. Although the GNM is ineffective, it acts as a focal point for UN opinion against the Sultan whilst the hospitality given to it by Saudi Arabia acts as a block to improved relations between the two countries. (e) Serial 10. Bin Nufl is probably a leader not the leader. (f) Serial 11. JIS comment refers to the current situation not the future. (g) Serial 12. As seen from Cairo. JIS comment is probably wrong. As seen from the Gulf, there is no valid comparison between EG DLF in Dhofar and NLF in Bahrain.

Cabinet Office S.W.1.
1st May 1968

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Copy No. 2 of 5

FOLIO 184

U.K. EYES ONLY

D/DISSEC/5/1/1

SECRETARY
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

(A) J326/1.

THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

Reference: JIC(67)54th Meeting, Minute 4 (C.A.) f/169.
JIC(68)13th Meeting, Minute 5 (C.A.) f/181.

At their above-mentioned meetings the Joint Intelligence Committee considered the case for re-opening the Consulate-General at Basra after the resumption of diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq.

2. The Foreign Office (DSAO) did not consider that the re-opening would be justified for purely diplomatic service purposes and, granted that there is still a potential Iraqi threat to Kuwait (JIC(67)53, para.15), the question became one of justification on intelligence grounds alone as a unique potential source of information on a particular problem area.

3. In early December 1967, the DIS made a strong case on these grounds but, since clandestine intelligence could be conducted from Baghdad, the case turned eventually on the requirement for local de visu intelligence. This, in our view could be based on the fact that Basra would continue to be a natural source of intelligence of threats to our position in the Gulf.

4. However, in view of the policy decisions announced by the Prime Minister on 16th January, 1968, the J.I.C. reviewed the problem again on 21st March and considered that the expenditure (£20 - 30,000 p.a.) was not worth while. The Committee accordingly invited the Defence Intelligence Staff to seek Chiefs of Staff agreement for this view.

Agreed 2.

J.I.C.Ref.

10th April, 1968

C. N. JOSLIN

Secretary
Defence Intelligence Staff

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CABINET OFFICE
B 02199
- 9 APR 1968
REGD
FILE No.

MR. THOMSON

c.c. The Co-ordinator

Intelligence Assessments on the Far East and Persian Gulf

You will have seen Sir Burke Trend's minute of 5th April to the Co-ordinator commissioning the two papers we spoke about on the Far East and the Persian Gulf. I have shown Sir Burke Trend the sets of questions covering each of these subjects which you sent me in your minute of 4th April and he agrees that they are the questions to which answers are required and that they should accordingly be used as guidance in preparing the papers. He particularly asks me to make the point that the final questions in each case (probable developments in the longer run affecting British interests) should, as far as possible, be tackled as thoroughly as the questions relating to the period up to the end of 1971.

On the Persian Gulf you will also want to have in mind that in the answers to your questions Ministers will be looking for guidance on the answer to the broader policy questions such as; whether we shall be able to stay in the Gulf until 1971; whether if we try to do so we may not get bogged down so that it will be more difficult to leave when the time comes; and consequently whether there might be advantage in trying to get out earlier.

P. L. Rose

9th April 1968

(P.L. ROSE)

JIC (68) 31 and JIC (68) 35 were produced, approved and circulated in response to the above requirement PT/20/6

D

183A

J365/1 / 128/4 / 326/1.

SIR DICK WHITE

cc Mr. Rose
Mr. Brooks Richards

I showed you the other day the timetable to which Mr. Rose's Defence Review Working Party is working, in collaboration with the external Departments and the Ministry of Defence, in relation to the defence White Paper which is projected for July. The process of formal interdepartmental consideration will begin with a discussion at OPD(O) in the first ten days of June and will continue with Ministerial discussions in OPD which are tentatively fixed for the 14th and 21st June. These will be followed by a Cabinet discussion, for which we are holding the 27th June; and with luck this should enable us to publish the White Paper on 8th July, i.e. in time for a debate before the House rises for the summer recess at the end of that month.

2. I think that it would be valuable if the JIC could produce - to match this timetable, i.e. by the beginning of June - two studies of the prospects in South East Asia and in the Gulf respectively, which would constitute the background against which Ministers should consider the means by which we propose to withdraw our military presence from those areas by the end of 1971 but also to retain a capability of intervening, if necessary, in the future. In other words, I would like officials and Ministers to have before them the best appreciation the JIC can give them of probable developments in South East Asia and the Gulf over the next few years and, therefore, of the circumstances in which we shall leave those areas without entirely disinteresting ourselves in them. Would you consider what could be put in hand on these lines?

3. I think that the PSIS should also consider - at much the same time as its members are debating in OPD(O) the military withdrawal - the extent to which we shall need, wish and be able to maintain an intelligence presence in South East Asia and the Gulf. This suggests a meeting of PSIS in early June, at which I hope we might be able to consider the outcome of Mr. Ewart-Biggs' study on this subject. Will it be ready in time?

[illegible]

March 1968

CONFIDENTIAL

128/4/326/1.

183a

MR. ROSE

Copy to: The Co-ordinator

You asked me to provide you with a note setting out the sort of questions which might be dealt with in the two papers on the Far East and the Persian Gulf commissioned by Sir B. Trend. I attach two sheets containing a suggested title and questions for each area.

It is never possible to be sure what a paper should contain until some serious work has been done. Accordingly, I should prefer not to have formal terms of reference any more than the Defence Review Working Party establishes terms of reference for their papers. The questions are therefore illustrative rather than exhaustive.

I assume that the procedure would be as follows: the Assessments Staff, after consulting all the appropriate experts in Whitehall, would submit the two papers to JIC "A" with JIC "B" brought in as necessary. JIC "A" would submit whatever they approved to OPDO at the same time as the papers which had been processed by the DRWP. To the extent you wished it, I would not myself see any difficulty in the DRWP being informed at appropriate moments of the progress of the two papers. I assume it would be necessary to submit the two papers to JIC "A" early in June.

(J.A. THOMSON)

4th April 1968

CONFIDENTIAL

Developments in the Persian Gulf affecting British interests

What are the threats to British interests before the withdrawal of our military presence?

In what situations might British military forces be involved before the end of 1971?

What will Russian policy be towards the area?

What will American policy be?

What are the prospects for stability in the area after the withdrawal of our military presence?

In the longer run, what are the probable developments affecting British interests?

Developments in the Far East affecting British interests

What will happen about Vietnam?

In the light of this what are the probable relations in the area of (1) the Great Powers; (2) the indigenous countries?

Depending on the substance and timing of the foregoing, what line will the countries concerned take towards a Western military presence and particularly a British military presence in the area?

What are the situations which might involve British military forces up to the end of 1971 and particularly over the next year or so?

What are the probable threats to British financial, commercial and other interests in the area?

In the light of possible changes in the present balance of power in the area, what are the prospects of a significant increase in Soviet, Chinese or indigenous Communist influence in the area?

In the longer run, what are the probable developments affecting British interests?

EXTRACT FROM J. I. C. (68) 15th MEETING HELD ON 4.4.68.

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183.

326/1
164/1.

UK EYES ONLY

SECRET
UK EYES ONLY

3. THE TUNB AND ABU MUSA ISLANDS

MR. EWART BIGGS said that an early assessment of the potential military value of the Tunb and Abu Musa Islands both to Iran and the Gulf Arab states would be useful. This might examine, in the context of possible unfriendly Iranian-Arab relations after our military withdrawal from the Gulf, whether Arab possession of the islands would be likely to threaten tne passage of shipping through the Straits of Hormuz to and from Iranian ports; and conversely whether Iranian security would be increased by possession of the islands.

The following points were made in discussion -

(a) it would be an advantage if the assessment, should it conclude, as seemed likely, that the islands were of no military value, were produced in a form which could be shown to the Iranians; it would be appropriate if arrangements could be made for this to be done on the authority of the Chief of the Defence Staff since this would carry particular weight with the Shah;

(b) the assessment would need to contain both intelligence and strategic judgements. It was therefore important that it should be prepared in full consultation with the staff of the Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations). The Logistics branch of the Directorate of Economic Intelligence might also usefully be consulted;

(c) the draft Weekly Survey Supplement on "Iran", which dealt with current Iranian developments with regard to the islands, should not be approved for issue, since its subject matter had been covered and, indeed, overtaken by diplomatic telegrams which had been fully circulated. However, it was important that the Chiefs of Staff, who would be much concerned at any development that might call in question our staging and overflying rights on the Iranian section of the CENTO route, should be kept promptly informed. Assessments of any appropriate further items of current intelligence on the subject should therefore be made and issued without delay.

The Committee -

(1) Instructed the Chief of the Assessments Staff to prepare a report on the potential military value to Iran and

UK EYES ONLY

the Gulf Arab states of the Tumb and Abu Musa Islands, taking account of (a) and (b) above.

(2) Instructed the Chairman, Current Intelligence Groups, to take action according to (c) above.

SECRET

LONDON, S.E.1.

28th March, 1968

S/JIC/4082

The Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee
(For the attention of Mr. D.J. Fewtrell)

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

1. We have now completed the draft of the up-dated (up to March 1968) version of our paper on "Subversive Activity in the Persian Gulf (JIC (66) 80 (Final)) and attach 30 copies as suggested in your letter J/326/1; we can provide further copies if required.

2. However it has not been shown to anyone outside this Service, e.g. the Arabian Department of the Foreign Office, G.C.H.Q., or the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. We would suggest that comments from these and other departments should be channelled to us by way of the Secretariat/ J.I.S. complex.

3. Previous papers in this series have contained, as an Appendix, a list of leading personalities engaged in subversive activities. This is currently being brought up-to-date, and we will send copies when available, but we preferred not to delay the issue of the paper itself on account of the Appendix. The Appendix to JIC (66) 80 (Final) is still basically accurate.

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

SECRET

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN THE GULF

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March 1968

Introduction and Conclusions

The Arab awakening, a familiar phenomenon of the past fifty years in most of the Middle East, has come late to the Persian Gulf. Indeed it is arguable whether or not it has yet really arrived. The truth, as symbolised by photographs taken of oil lorries driving past bedouin and their camels, is that the modern and the ancient are being compelled to live in incongruous and sometimes uneasy co-existence. The power of broadcasting and the mass manufacture and sales of transistor radios have made it impossible to insulate any country - even Muscat - from the contemporary world. But the revolutionary themes poured out by Cairo radio and other wireless stations, although heard alike by townspeople in Bahrain, by the mercenaries who make up the majority of the various Security Forces in the area, and by the bedouin tribesmen, strike very different chords in the hearts of so disparate an audience.

2. The first strivings of the awakening in the Gulf were discernible in the early 1950's. Educated and travelled Gulf Arabs who regarded both their own form of society and its dependence on British protection as anachronisms began to meet, discuss and conspire. "Coffee house subversion" is a characteristic Arab trait, a safety valve for the airing of grievances and the letting off of steam. Informal groups turned themselves into clubs, clubs became movements, movements split as their leaders quarrelled and their supporters drifted away, perhaps to form or join new groups and so perpetuate the process. Just occasionally, as in Bahrain in March 1965, leaders of a movement get themselves involved in communal disturbances. At such times the movement must attract to itself the credit or blame, depending on the outlook of the observer, for events not really of its making. The effect is predictable. The authorities step in to suppress the disturbances, the leaders are imprisoned or exiled, and the disruption of the group is effected from outside instead of from within. And so, if the Gulf could remain in isolation, would it continue.

/3. This paper...

3. This paper is concerned with some of the more important movements which have emerged in the Gulf during the past fifteen years. With two exceptions, their achievements have been negligible. This is because outside Bahrain and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman they have appealed to only a fraction of the population. A paper about potentially subversive nationalist groups, in an area where such groups are the occupation of a small minority, is not to be regarded as a political survey of the area. The picture it paints, though accurate, is inevitably selective. To be seen in perspective, it should be remembered that this species of nationalism has made little impact on the essentially tribal structure of Gulf society. Shaikhly rule and the British presence, mutually supporting and mutually restraining, are not threatened by "coffee house subversion". Whether Shaikhly rule alone will be able to preserve stability when the British withdraw at a time not dictated by local conditions is as yet unpredictable; if not, what will take its place, how the transformation will occur, and the extent to which British commercial and financial interests in the area will suffer is also problematical.

4. Since miniscule states such as Ajman and Fujairah are clearly unsuited to sovereign independence, with United Nations membership, etc., the advent of independence raises problems to which much thought has been given. Federation and fusion have been discussed and advocated, in the interests of viability and modernity, and the Trucial rulers have now committed themselves to union in principle. But modernity, as seen by the members of most of the nationalist organisations described in this paper, is the desire of only a minority of the inhabitants of the Gulf. The announcement of the impending British withdrawal has been greeted with dismay not only by the Shaikhs and their tribal supporters, but also by many of the nationalists themselves. And it is no accident that the two nationalist movements which at different times - in Oman in 1959 and in Dhofar since 1964 - have assumed military proportions, have been motivated not by an urge for unity but by separatist ambitions.

/5. While....

5. While planners have worked for the fusion of the Trucial States, Omanis and Dhofaris have fought and died, not for Arab unity or President Nasser, but for their right to preserve their own tribal and religious customs free from the connection with Muscat. The Omani rebellion, though championed characteristically by Cairo, was in fact reactionary rather than progressive. Essentially a tribal and religious revolt, it collapsed in the face of strong resistance from the Sultan's Armed Forces backed by the intervention of British forces. By comparison with the Omanis, the Dhofaris have several advantages, principally the presence of a friendly and well-armed neighbour, the People's Republic of South Yemen (P.R.S.Y.) formerly the British Protectorate of South Arabia. If the British withdrawal from Aden is, as has sometimes been forecast, the spark from which revolution is to spread to the Gulf, the path of the blaze must pass through Dhofar. Here, for the moment at any rate, is the area's weak spot.

6. This is a descriptive, not a planning paper. It paints a picture but draws no conclusions. The picture could easily be misinterpreted, as one of nationalist forces bubbling and seething, awaiting only the British withdrawal to turn out the Shaikhs and replace them by socialist republics. So it may prove to be, for revolution is always the work of the minority, and there are powerful outside forces, notably the U.A.R., Iraq and Syria, which may well consider it in their interest to bring this about. In the groups described in this paper, groups which may by 1971 have changed their names and leaders but hardly their character, these countries will find allies, though probably not tools. But suspicions of the ambitions of the U.A.R. and the other more powerful Arab countries are not limited to the Shaikhs; they are acutely shared by the nationalists themselves. In this common fear and interest lies the best hope for the Gulf's future stability - a reconciliation between the more enlightened rulers and the more moderate of their opponents. To consider the possibilities for such a course, some study and knowledge of the nationalist movements is a pre-requisite.

/KUWAIT....

KUWAIT

7. Introduction

Kuwait differs from the other Gulf States by being internationally recognised as fully independent. This has two practical consequences. First, the local nationalist movements are important not only for their internal activities and aspirations, but for the assistance they can and do render to their counterparts elsewhere in the Gulf. Secondly, the only foreign embassies in the Gulf are located in Kuwait; it is therefore from Kuwait that the U.A.R. subversion effort in the Gulf is locally directed. The Kuwaiti government disapproves of the activities both of its own nationalists, and of the U.A.R. Embassy, to create and abet subversion in other parts of the Gulf, but does not feel politically strong enough to take a firm line against them. It reaps a dividend to the extent that the U.A.R. Embassy in Kuwait, in return for Kuwaiti tolerance of its activities, has been careful not to indulge, or anyway not to be seen to indulge, in activities directly opposed to the Kuwaiti government itself.

8. The Kuwait Arab Socialist Union (K.A.S.U.)

However, the Arab Socialist Union, the sole legal political party in the U.A.R., possesses a Kuwaiti branch known as the K.A.S.U. Since political parties are banned in Kuwait, the K.A.S.U. operates clandestinely and is probably guided if not directed in its political activities by the U.A.R. Embassy in Kuwait. We have no information to suggest that it has attempted either to operate outside Kuwait itself, or to indulge in illegal subversive activities inside the country. During 1967, probably as a result of the correct (from the U.A.R. point of view) attitude adopted by the Kuwait government over the Israeli war, it does not appear to have made its presence felt. In 1966 the K.A.S.U. made an unsuccessful "take-over bid" for the K.A.N.M. (see below); although this was resisted, links are still maintained between the two groups, though Kablan SHUMARI, the K.A.S.U. official primarily responsible, was deported from Kuwait in about May 1966.

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9. The Kuwait Arab Nationalist Movement

Since political parties are banned, the K.A.N.M. exists only as an informal grouping of individuals who maintain loose links with the A.N.M. abroad, having grown out of the pan-Arab nationalist movement which originated in Beirut in the late 1940s. Its doctrine, seldom elaborately or dogmatically spelled out, embraces a desire for the union of all Arabs under one leader, for an exclusion of foreign influence, and for solving the problem of Palestine by force. Although there are A.N.M. branches in several Arab countries, their activities do not appear to be centrally co-ordinated, with the result that they enjoy considerable tactical flexibility. For instance, the Bahrain branch has generally been content to accept guidance from Cairo, while the K.A.N.M., after resisting a move to amalgamate with the Egyptian-controlled K.A.S.U. in early 1966, later supplied funds to the anti-Egyptian N.L.F. movement in South Arabia.

10. It is not known how the K.A.N.M. had its beginnings, but it is believed to have evolved from the many local political clubs which started in the 1950s and which had the backing of the U.A.R. The two most prominent Kuwaitis associated with it, AHMAD KHATIB and JASIM QITAMI, are well known political figures in the nationalist opposition. They were both members of the National Assembly until December 1965, when they resigned in protest against government policy, in particular the ban on the formation of political parties and the rejection of their claim to a weighted vote that would have enabled them to outvote the bedouin majority in the National Assembly. In the 1967 elections they stood as opposition candidates but, the elections being rigged against them, they did not succeed.

11. KHATIB and QITAMI combine their leadership of the K.A.N.M. with a close involvement with the party's covert affairs. These latter include the maintenance of close links with the down-Gulf nationalist organisations, the offering of facilities (such as visas), jobs and financial help to nationalist exiles living in or transitting Kuwait, and in

/taking such...

taking such initiatives as are possible in establishing nationalists in areas - Qatar, the Trucial States and Saudi Arabia - where either no organisation exists or supervision is strict. The K.A.N.M. was particularly helpful to the 1965 Bahraini exiles who took up residence in Kuwait, and derives from them and from a small number of their supporters who have received training in the U.A.R., a terrorist potential which has, however, never been put to the test. The K.A.N.M. has also tried to foster A.N.M. activities in Qatar and the Trucial States, and possess links with the branch of the A.N.M. in the Eastern province of Saudi Arabia, and with the Omani Rebel Movement although not with its office in Kuwait. These links, however, are fraternal in nature, and do not imply that nationalist activity in Qatar or the Trucial States is in any way controlled from Kuwait.

12. Government Policy towards Nationalists

In the summer of 1966, the Kuwait Government's policy underwent an important change. Hitherto it had felt too weak to risk offending the U.A.R. and other "progressive" Arab states by clamping down on subversive movements. At this date there was a clamp-down on the activities of non-Kuwaiti movements in Kuwait. In May and June 1966, a large number of non-Kuwaiti nationalists were deported; this has had the effect of weakening, though not severing, the links between Kuwaiti nationalists and their counterparts, in other parts of the Gulf. So far as Kuwaiti nationalists were concerned, an attempt was made to divide the moderates from the extremists. The newspaper "Al Tali'a" edited by Sami Ahmad Abdul-Aziz AL-MUNAYYIS, a K.A.N.M. extremist, was suppressed for one year; it re-appeared just in time to cover the Israeli War of 1967. When the Arab/Israeli War broke out the Kuwait Government supported the Arab cause, and despatched two army battalions to the U.A.R. They also prohibited the export of oil to the countries, including Great Britain, which had allegedly assisted the Israelis. In return for this, the various labour and nationalist organisations agreed not to try to sabotage the oil installations, with the result that when the political

/situation...

situation made it possible, the flow of oil was smoothly and rapidly resumed. (The only attempted sabotage, which was quite unsuccessful, came from Palestinian expatriates). Some nationalists did attempt to impose a boycott on other aspects of Kuwaiti trade with the west, but this was frustrated by the reluctance of the local merchants to co-operate, and also by the government's policy of deporting trouble makers.

13. The Kuwaiti authorities have thus, by going some way along the nationalist's road, taken controversy out of the issues on which they could have aroused popular emotion against the government. At the same time by making overtures towards some of the more moderate of their number, they have sought to divide the ranks of the nationalist opposition.

BAHRAIN

14. Introduction

The presence of an efficient Special Branch in Bahrain has meant that there has been considerable penetration of the larger subversive organisations. However less is known of the smaller groups. The details concerning the Ba'ath party itself were relatively obscure until its membership was swelled in the latter half of 1967. The following paragraphs cover only the more significant movements.

15. The Bahrain Arab Nationalist Movement

The B.A.N.M.'s inception in the late 1950's under Abdul Rahman KAMAL, was, apart from the Kuwaiti political clubs, the first active manifestation of Arab Nationalist activity in the Persian Gulf. It is traditionally a Sunni, pro-Nasser, pro-U.A.R. party, originally based upon secondary school teachers and upon the student clubs (especially the Bahrain Student's Union) which they gathered round them. It was organised into a four-tier cell structure, but although the meetings were held in secret, the B.A.N.M.'s cell formation was not a secure one, and there appeared to be no organisational structure, or concrete membership

(although a present estimate puts it at 200).

16. The activities of the B.A.N.M. led in 1962-63 to a suppression of B.A.N.M. political activity by the Bahrain authorities. At this time the organisation numbered about 160 active members. A number of leading members left Bahrain to take up jobs, and continued plotting from Kuwait or Beirut. Of those who remained in Bahrain, the leadership devolved on Yussuf SAYYAR, Muhammad SHAKER and Muhammad (or Ahmad) KAMAL, the owner of the Asiatic Furniture Company.

17. In the autumn of 1962 the U.A.R. decided to train young Gulf nationalists as agitators, saboteurs and terrorists at the U.A.R. army commando training centre near Cairo. Nine Bahrainis were sent for training in 1963, all being either junior leaders of the B.A.N.M. or in key employment (Bahrain Petroleum Company (B.A.P. Co.) Kuwait Oil Company (K.O.C.), Posts and Telegraphs etc.) or both. Many of these men assumed positions of responsibility in the B.A.N.M. after their return, and one effect of their training was that in 1964-65 the B.A.N.M. was rebuilt on more restricted lines than before.

18. The B.A.N.M. came out into the open at the time of the March 1965 disturbances, but its activities proved premature and resulted in the arrest of its leaders. Since then it has never recovered its cohesion nor its organisational ability. For some time the movement's activities were confined to meetings of groups of people with similar political views. These small groups, mainly Sunnis from the township of MUHARRAQ and MANAMA lacked both leadership and unity of purpose.

19. In March 1965, with the disappearance of the "old guard" leaders, an alliance of a number of Bahraini Nationalist groups was formed for the purpose of "mutual protection"; this group called itself the Front of National Forces (F.N.F.). The alliance eventually disintegrated, leaving a rump aspiring simply to be a revival of the militant wing of the A.N.M.; its leader is Ali Muhammad

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al QOO, a Bahraini schoolteacher who was involved in attacks on Bapco buses in 1965, and continued his nationalist activities after being released from prison in Augustl966. Since July 1967 he has been living and working in Kuwait but still maintains links with the F.N.F. in Bahrain, as do other Bahraini exiles in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

20. In April and May 1967 the A.N.M. "old guard" now either released from detention or returned from their self-imposed exile, began to meet again to consider the revival of the movement. Their efforts received a boost from the great upsurge of the Arab/Israeli crisis. The demonstrations that occurred from 6th to 9th June were A.N.M./F.N.F.-inspired and A.N.M./F.N.F.-led; most of the 26 known leaders of the demonstrations were prominent A.N.M. figures before the 1965 disturbances.

21. In spite of the support for the A.N.M.-inspired demonstrations in 1967 and the general sympathy for A.N.M. ideals, it would be incorrect to put too much emphasis on the movement's renaissance. It has recently been described as more a spirit than a society and is divided into rival little groups whose security threat consists both in being able to bring its supporters out into the streets in large numbers at moments of crisis, and in being a fertile recruiting ground for the E.I.S.

22. <u>The Bahrain National Liberation Front</u>

The National Liberation Front of Bahrain first came to notice in late 1956. It consisted of left-wing sympathisers and was connected with other Communist-orientated N.L.F.'s in Saudi Arabia and Iran.

23. Membership of the B.N.L.F. is almost solely drawn from the Shia majority living in the villages along the northern edge of the Island; as of late 1967, the N.L.F. had a nominal membership of about 500 - 370 of whom have been identified, and half of whom are active participants in the Front's activities.

/24. It possesses...

24. It possesses a three-tier cell structure (cells, main cells and base cells) and a controlling body known as "Committee 17". Theoretically, these cells are not interconscious and in fact, the N.L.F. places considerable importance on security. In early 1967, the movement was reported to be adapting its cell structure to fit in with, and to make use of the Shia "matam" system. (A "matam" is an assembly area for religious lectures, discussions and flagellation ceremonies). There is also a "military wing" which, as one of its functions acts under the direction of Committee 17 as the effective disciplinary aim of the N.L.F.

25. The B.N.L.F. was largely disrupted in the summer of 1961 by the arrest and banishment of some of its leaders. At that time 80 members were identified. In spite of this disruption the N.L.F. continued its activities on a reduced scale, falling increasingly under Communist influence. Various pamphlets were issued during 1966 and 1967, and in addition to these, the N.L.F. produced a clandestine paper in Bahrain, "Al Jamahir". One of the B.N.L.F.'s leaders, Ali Abdulla DUWAIGHIR is Moscow-trained; and Bahraini delegates of the N.L.F. attended the W.P.C. in Helsinki in July 1965, the Bulgarian Communist Party Conference in 1965, and the Afro-Asian Peoples' Conference in Cyprus in February 1967.

26. After the decline of the B.A.N.M. caused by the arrest of its leaders in 1965, various attempts were made towards the formation of a united front by the B.A.N.M. and the B.N.L.F. These came to nothing, but seem to have resulted in a significant increase in B.N.L.F. members, most of the intake presumably coming from the B.A.N.M. There has been a sprinkling of N.L.F. resignations on account of the Party's increasingly Communist and atheistic doctrine, but this has probably been more than made up by a new intake from the left-wing of the A.N.M.

27. During 1967, the B.N.L.F. made little public impact. Its efforts to support the Arab cause over Israel were half-hearted; a weak attempt to convert Shia religious processions

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celebrating the Prophet's Birthday on 29th May 1967 into a political demonstration failed, and the Front's support of the demonstrations of 6th to 9th June only ran to a leaflet circulated on the evening of 6th June calling for unity among Bahrainis and pleading B.N.L.F. support for the Arab cause. However, during this period the B.N.L.F. was evidently concentrating on improving its own internal party organisation into a formidable clandestine machine, rather than trying to gain mass support or indulge in public activities. In spite of some defections to the Ba'athists during the Arab/Israeli crisis, the Party structure remained intact.

28. The N.L.F. is well-placed to support any plan for civil disorder: it is strongly represented in the Bahrain Petroleum Company, and the Bahrain State Electricity Department; a number of teachers are Front members, and there are N.L.F. members in Gulf Aviation, Customs, and other Government Departments.

29. The arrest and interrogation of all but one of a batch of trainees on their return from a course in the U.A.R. (see paragraph 33) showed that both they, and in some cases their cell leaders, have sufficient knowledge of sabotage techniques to pose a major threat to security if the B.N.L.F. has the will and the materials to mount a sabotage/terrorist campaign.

30. The B.N.L.F. seems to be backed by considerable outside support. It is known that the B.N.L.F. has strong links with the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe; 13 B.N.L.F. members were due to leave Bahrain at the end of 1967 for further education in these countries. A party of 15 B.N.L.F. members were due to go for military training in East Germany in March or April 1968, and a group of 32 others were supposed to be sent to a Communist Youth Festival (presumably the 9th World Youth Festival in Sofia in July/August 1968). It seems very likely that Russian or Eastern European Communist funds have been made available to the Front either in Bahrain or in Cairo to finance these various ventures.

/31. Besides...

31. Besides this there is some evidence that three B.N.L.F. delegates attended a conference in Albania in February 1968. It may also be significant that in June 1967, 3 B.N.L.F. members left Syria for China where they were to "study" for one year to 18 months; all three had previously been studying in the U.S.S.R. or Eastern Europe.

32. The N.L.F. links with Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia are also very strong, since the oppressed Shia majority in the Eastern Province form a natural refuge for B.N.L.F. members who find it inconvenient to stay in Bahrain, and there is a lot of coming and going between the two communities. There also appear to be connections with subversive groups in Qatar, and the Saudi Arabia/Neutral Zone which in turn is in contact with Cairo and Damascus, and is reportedly used as a means of channelling funds to the N.L.F. groups in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

33. The links between the B.N.L.F. and Dubai are through a firm called HASSAN and HABIB MAHMOUD, suspected of arms smuggling on behalf of the B.N.L.F. and staffed by deported B.N.L.F. members. It seems likely that this manifestation of the N.L.F. in Dubai is not an indigenous organisation, but a recent offshoot of the Bahrain movement, which has come to roost in Dubai because of Bahrain Special Branch policy of harrassment and deportation.

34. The U.A.R. trained a group of 15 B.N.L.F. members in sabotage techniques near Cairo in Autumn 1966. The B.N.L.F. representative in Cairo acts as a channel through whom Bahrainis wishing to receive training in sabotage and subversive techniques are put in touch with the U.A.R. authorities. It has been reported that this training has been given almost indiscriminately to Bahrainis in Cairo who express this desire, i.e. not only members of the B.N.L.F.

35. <u>The Ba'ath Party</u>

The Bahrain Branch of the Ba'ath Party dates from 1957, but it is only since June 1967 that it has become noticeably

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active, although it did play a small part in the March 1965 disturbances. Its leader is Ahmad Ibrahim al SABAH, whose Shaikhly connections have helped him to steer clear of trouble with the authorities, and who maintains close links with Damascus.

36. Its growth during 1967 undoubtedly largely derives from the decline in President Nasser's stock among Arab Nationalists and from the impotence of both the A.N.M. and the N.L.F. during the Arab/Israeli War of June 1967; these have been important factors in channelling support away from the A.N.M. and the N.L.F. to the benefit of the Ba'ath. The latter received a sudden stimulus in August 1967 with the return to Bahrain of many Bahraini students who had been studying in Damascus, and who belonged to an active Ba'athist group there. Their enthusiasm resulted in a rapid increase in the number of party meetings which had the effect of drawing nationalists of other groups to their ranks. The students' zeal can be largely attributed to the work of Abdul Aziz SHAMLAN, the representative in Damascus of the Bahraini Ba'ath Party, who had the advantage of being able to offer possibilities of positive action to Ba'athist supporters. By November 1967 the Ba'athists had become a significant group in the Island. Ba'athist meetings have been held in north coast villages formerly regarded as strongholds of the National Liberation Front (N.L.F.), Ba'athists have been responsible for slogan writing in Manama, and the Party is building a system of clandestine cells.

37. SHAMLAN has for some time been instrumental in arranging for Bahrainis to study in the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe. Following the Israeli war, he assumed responsibility to the Syrians for selecting suitable Bahrainis to be given military training by them. These recruits attend courses at the ZABADANI Camp, which may last for fourteen days, one month, or one year. Three trainees who returned from the fourteen day course reported that they had been taught grenade throwing and how to handle a light machine gun.

38. There are regular contacts with Damascus and a good deal of correspondence passes between Damascus and Bahrain

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carried by safe hand (one courier who was intercepted in mid-November 1967 was found to be carrying 28 letters, of which 9 were addressed to Ba'athist Bahrainis in Damascus). The Ba'athists are helped in recruiting young Bahrainis by the popular belief that a Bahraini student cannot be accepted in Syria unless sponsored by the Bahrain Students Union in Damascus and thus by the Ba'athists. There are also indications that Syrian Ba'athists are interested in Bahrain not only for its own sake, but as a focal point for spreading Ba'athism round the Gulf, e.g. in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Trucial Oman. According to a recent report, the Ba'athists are planning a meeting in March 1968 to be held in Damascus at which all Ba'athist groups throughout the Gulf will be represented.

39. Active membership of the Bahrain Ba'athist Party stood in September 1967 at about 174; it is no longer exclusively a society of the intelligentsia. In view of the increasing influence of the Soviet Union over the Ba'ath Party of Syria, it is possible that Ba'athism will in the long run produce a better organised and co-ordinated subversive movement in the Gulf than has yet been known, though its rigid and doctrinaire ideas may prove an obstacle to its universal acceptability.

QATAR

40. Introduction

Since the Ruler of Qatar has perfected the technique of presenting malcontents with the alternatives of commercial prosperity or expulsion, there has been little encouragement for an effective leadership to emerge to unite the various pockets of nationalist discontent. In addition, the size of the Army and the Police is such as to discourage any overt dissident activity of any significance. Such activity as there is among the infant political movements in Qatar (particularly the A.N.M. and Ba'ath) is mainly the work

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of non-Qataris particularly Bahrainis.

41. The Arab Nationalist Movement (A.N.M.)

In 1963, an incipient growth of the A.N.M. in Qatar was nipped in the bud when following civil disturbances, some 20 leaders were banished. No further indications of A.N.M. activity in Qatar came to light until October 1967, when it was reported that an A.N.M. cell had been formed, under the direction of one Hitmi Ahmad al HITMI. In December 1967, this man informed his cell that there were persons in Qatar trained in handling small arms, and that in the near future A.N.M. members would be taken out into the desert for arms training. HITMI is known to be in close and frequent contact with Hassam QADDURA, one of the more important Ba'athists in Qatar.

42. The National Liberation Front (N.L.F.)

The Shia community, which provides the main source of recruits to the N.L.F. in Bahrain and the Gulf, is numerically weak in Qatar. The small degree of N.L.F. activity which takes place in Qatar is inspired from Bahrain, and is conducted by persons who have been deported from Bahrain. N.L.F. cell activity in an organised sense has not come to notice in Qatar.

43. The Ba'ath Party

When, in March 1965, attempts were made in Qatar to promote disturbances in sympathy with those taking place in Bahrain, the initiative probably came from the Ba'athists. Since then, the little Ba'athist activity which has come to notice is largely confined to the circulation of propaganda material through the post to the same people who have been receiving it for years. However, Abdul Karim Mohsen Ali al NAJAR, a prominent Bahraini Ba'athist, has established letter links with Damascus and Al Khobar, and a courier link with the active Ba'ath movement in Qatar; he himself is shortly to be posted overseas to South-East Asia by his employers, 'Shell', but the links will presumably be taken over by someone else.

/44. The Muslim....

44. The Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is well entrenched in Qatar, particularly in the Education and Medical Departments. There has been a marked increase in Muslim Brotherhood activity in recent months. They do not yet pose a serious security threat, but if the movement were able to make organisational improvements it is likely to attract a large following and could become a force to be reckoned with in the future.

45. The Gulf Liberation Front (G.L.F.)

The G.L.F., a pan-Gulf nationalist movement which has emerged in 1966/67, appears to have made some progress in Qatar. Its strength there is not known, partly because of its cellular structure, but also because of its leaders' wish not to compromise themselves prematurely by becoming involved in civil disturbances and thereby providing the authorities with the opportunity to deport them. The G.L.F. is described more fully in the section on the Trucial States.

46. Use of Qatar by non-Qatari Movements

Various non-Qatari movements have shown an interest in Qatar in the past. The Omanis blew up the B.B.M.E. branch in Doha in 1960 as part of their anti-British campaign, and used Doha as a staging port for despatching arms and men to Oman. The Dhofaris have also used Qatar and a convoy leaving Qatar for Dhofar was apprehended by the Qatari police in summer 1966. The A.N.M. has sent members on fact-finding tours to Qatar and so has the Iraqi I.S., without either initiative producing any practical result.

TRUCIAL STATES

47. Introduction

From 1964 onwards, various attempts have been made to exploit nationalist feeling in the Trucial States and channel

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it into one organisation covering Trucial Oman. Three such organisations of some significance have been established, though the earlier ones are on the wane. The appeal of these movements to the semi-educated youth of the North Trucial States, such as it is, is based on the prospect of scholarships and the fleshpots of Cairo rather than on any political grounds.

48. The Nationalist Organisation of the Trucial States (N.O.T.S.)

N.O.T.S. emerged in 1964 as a revolutionary nationalist movement pledged to the overthrow of Shaikhly rule. In 1965 it took on a more coherent form, receiving direction from Damascus and maintaining contact in Kuwait with nationalist leaders such as KHATIB and QITAMI. Its aims extended to the sabotage of British installations in the Trucial States and to the political assassination of British officials and Arab Rulers. It probably received arms from the Omani rebels in Damascus.

49. However in spite of a number of plan-of-action meetings throughout 1966, N.O.T.S. has made no impact at all, and would now appear to be defunct as an organisation. The title is still used as a convenient label under which to group young nationalists of the "coffee shop" variety. Although the organisation does not formally exist at present, the members form a reservoir from which any future subversive movement would seek to recruit, as did the G.L.F. throughout 1967.

50. Peoples' Organisation for the Liberation of Oman (P.O.L.O.)

In June 1965, Saqr bin Sultan, the then ruler of Sharjah was deposed for open pro-U.A.R. activities. After his deposition, he was financed by the U.A.R. and acted as a talent-spotter on their behalf for discontented Omanis who were prepared to receive military training in the U.A.R. and then return to the Trucial Oman or the Sultanate to start subversive campaigns against the authorities. In the summer of 1966, Saqr recruited for this purpose a group of 30 Omanis studying at Baghdad University and labelled

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the group the Peoples' Organisation for the Liberation of Oman (P.O.L.O.)

51. These 30 Omanis, after receiving some form of "special training" were despatched from Iraq in late 1966 via Kuwait to Ras al Khaimah; there, their orders were to "spread the word, unite their ranks, and agree on a method of attacking the enemy". Once this had been achieved, the Egyptians were to supply them with large quantities of arms and explosives.

52. At Ras al Khaimah the party dispersed; its original leader, Muhammed Salim al MUAMMARI, was arrested in Sharjah in February 1967, and, because his group was believed to be directed against the Sultanate, handed over to the Sultan's Armed Forces for interrogation. Although al MUAMMARI was subsequently released, his mission had been effectively disrupted, and since then no further P.O.L.O. activities have come to light.

53. <u>The Gulf Liberation Front</u>

In August 1966, Ahmad Muhammad AIDHA, a Dhofari employed by the Qatar Electricity Department, composed - with the assistance of other young nationalists - the constitution for a new combined Front for all nationalist organisations in the Gulf. This was to be called the Gulf Liberation Front (G.L.F.) - an alternative translation is the Front for the Liberation of the Arabian Gulf (F.L.A.G.).

54. According to this constitution, the Front's aim is to remove the British presence in the Gulf and to ensure that Iran does not take its place. While not specifying the exact form of rule it seeks for the area, its references to "Reaction", the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, and Arab Unity indicate that it has no time for the present rulers. It is stated in the constitution that the G.L.F. would "not shrink from using explosion and arson" to obtain its ends.

55. In October 1966, the G.L.F. held a meeting in Kuwait with representatives from Qatar, Bahrain and Dubai. The Kuwait group seems to have been the first in the field,

/reports....

reports of its existence dating from 1966, but by late 1967 Qatar was well-established as the most active point of the Front's activities, with branches in Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai and Sharjah. One effect of this, however, has been that while the constitution of the G.L.F. makes it clear that it was intended as a Gulf-wide Organisation, some Qatari members think of it as primarily concerned with Qatari affairs.

56. There has been evidence of various recruitment drives and meetings, but no sign as yet that the G.L.F. has put into practice the violence which it proclaims. In October 1966, Abu ABBAS, a Qatari Customs Official and G.L.F. member, reportedly received explosives through Bahrain customs which originated from Beirut. A cache of arms was found in Qatar in June 1967 although it has not been established who deposited it.

57. The riots in Dubai during the June War were instigated with the help of a G.L.F. member, but there were many participants who had no direct connection with the G.L.F.; this illustrates, however, how nationalist leaders can, when given a suitable opportunity, whip up support beyond the range of their immediate connections. The pre-eminence of Qatar in the G.L.F. is illustrated by the fact that of 26 leading members identified in August 1967, about two-thirds were from Qatar. The leader of the Qatari group, Sayyid RASHID, works in the customs department at Doha, as do other G.L.F. members.

58. In Dubai, the Front appears to have made little impact, due partly perhaps to the reputation for indiscretion of Majid Ubaid MAKTOUM, who visited Dubai from Qatar in June 1967 to get resident N.O.T.S. members to join the G.L.F. (MAKTOUM has subsequently been reported to have been expelled from the G.L.F. for drunkenness and general indiscretion). He appears to have been told in Dubai that the time was not considered right by N.O.T.S. members for an upsurge in nationalist activity. The independence of Aden was regarded as the significant starting point for such a move. However, although this latter became a fact in November

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1967, there have not as yet been any signs of large-scale rallying to the G.L.F. in Dubai or elsewhere.

59. The Movement is described as having an embryonic cell structure, although it is doubtful whether there is anywhere apart from Qatar where it has enough members to make this practicable.

60. There is conflicting evidence about the degree of connection between the U.A.R. and the G.L.F. A Gulf visitor to Cairo back in late 1964 was told that the U.A.R. intended to set up a combined Front for the Gulf. During 1966 and 1967 there was widespread rumours to this effect, and in July 1967, one report claimed that this Front had indeed been established, was identical with the G.L.F., and had its headquarters in Cairo. However, the G.L.F. constitution states that, although it should have an office in Cairo to administer the affairs of Gulf youths in the U.A.R., neither this nor any other branch would be the Front's headquarters. A November 1967 report from a reliable source stated that there was as yet no G.L.F. office in Cairo, though it was hoped to open one shortly. The balance of evidence, therefore, is that despite certain contrary reports, the G.L.F. is not directed or controlled from Cairo.

61. Nothing definite is known about the G.L.F.'s relations with other nationalist organisations in Bahrain and the Trucial States. So far as N.O.T.S. is concerned, the G.L.F. would seem to be trying to poach its membership, and this may well be true of the A.N.M. also. The fact that it enjoys the support of Saqr bin Sultan would suggest that any remnants still existing from P.O.L.O. have been absorbed in the G.L.F. The G.L.F. has expressed support in general terms for the Dhofar Liberation Front (D.L.F.) but there is no evidence of material assistance either way. A request made through the auspices of Saqr bin Sultan, to obtain recruits from the Omani Rebel Movement, was refused by the Imam.

/62. The Ba'ath Party....

62. The Ba'ath Party

In the Trucial States the distinction between the Ba'ath Party and the N.L.F. is not a clear one. Since June 1967, there has been an upsurge of Ba'athist activity mainly amongst Bahraini schoolteachers employed in Dubai and Sharjah. There is also evidence that Dubai is a link in the chain of command between the Ba'athists of Damascus and Bahrain.

SULTANATE OF MUSCAT AND OMAN

Omani Rebel Movement

63. Background

Whereas the majority of Arab Nationalist movements in the Gulf have a more or less progressive appeal, that of the Omani rebel movement is a traditionalist one. From 1955 until 1964 it was the only opposition force to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman of any significance, and was aided in waging its struggle against him by the U.A.R., Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. This support has dwindled recently, largely in disillusionment with the movement's ineffectiveness and its failure to establish itself in Omani territory; this decline in support has in turn further reduced its activity. The movement at the moment constitutes an irritant rather than a threat to the Sultan's security.

64. The origins of Omani claims for independence of Muscat go back long before the present century. The balance reached at the Treaty of Sib in 1920 began to break down in the early 1950's. The Imam Ghalib bin ALI, with some tribal support, first tried to assert his independence of the Sultan in 1955; in 1957 tribal dissidence escalated into insurrection, and the Sultan was forced to call upon British assistance to put it down; by 1959 the campaign was over and the Imam and his supporters were reduced to the status of landless exiles, dependent on Saudi hospitality.

/The leaders...

The leaders of the rebellion were Arabs of considerable standing in the Oman. Besides the Imam and his brother Talib, the rebels included Sulaiman bin Himyar and Salih bin Issa al Harithi, both prominent tribal Shaikhs, while in the lower echelons of command the rebels could boast the presence of the Salmi family (revered for their descent from the blind historian and poet Abdullah bin Humayid al Salmi).

65. Since they went into exile, the various members of these leading Omani families have found employment in the propaganda field and in the administration of the Imamate Offices in Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Kuwait and Basra. For instance, Himyar bin Sulaiman, the son of Sulaiman bin Himyar, is active as a broadcaster and propagandist over Cairo Radio and is Director of the Imamate Office in Cairo. These offices, which have been accorded semi-diplomatic status (and financial assistance) by the countries in which they have been established, have been the movement's means of communication with the various Arab governments from which they have sought assistance.

66. Since the collapse of the rebellion, the activities of the Omani rebel movement inside the territory of the Sultanate itself have been minimal, consisting mainly of occasional mine-laying incidents. Indeed, the Imam and his movement now command little or no popular support inside the Sultanate, and they could not become a significant political force unless or until the Sultan died, or was assassinated. The present significance of the Omani rebel movement lies in the presence, in all Gulf States, of large numbers of expatriate Omanis in the Security Forces, as badly-paid labourers etc. Thus, although the Omani rebel movement has no immediate capacity to affect events in the Sultanate, it has the potential to mount sabotage attacks against Western targets in the rest of the Gulf. Outside the Sultanate, the Omanis, under U.A.R. supervision, embarked during the period 1959-62 on a series of terrorist activities. Subsequently, quite considerable numbers of Omanis have received military or subversive training in Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Syria or the U.A.R., but very few of these seem to have found their way back to

/the Oman...

the Oman. These subjects are treated in more detail in the respective sections on the aid given by these countries to nationalist movements in the Gulf.

67. The Dhofari Liberation Front (D.L.F.)

The southernmost province of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, Dhofar, was only incorporated into the Sultanate in comparatively modern times and has never been properly assimilated. The Dhofaris have always regarded the Omanis, who perform much of the administration, as foreigners, and their largest tribe, the Qarra, possess much closer ethnical, religious and linguistic ties with the people of Mahra across the frontier in the Peoples' Republic of South Yemen (P.R.S.Y.) than with the Omanis. The political aim of the D.L.F. is therefore fundamentally separatist.

68. The first signs of organised physical resistance to the Sultan's rule in Dhofar came in 1963, when vehicles belonging to a prospecting oil company was ambushed and wrecked and an escorting soldier killed. This piece of sabotage was perpetrated by a band led by Musallim bin NUFL, who at that time was little more than a bandit. Following this, in 1964, bin NUFL went to Iraq where he and a group of companions were given some military training. On their return to Dhofar, they began to refer to themselves as the Dhofar Liberation Front (D.L.F.), and their activity developed from banditry into an organised sabotage movement with a political and particularly an anti-British character. Iraqi plans to impose a more sophisticated political leadership on the D.L.F. came to grief in 1966 when the intended leaders on their way from Iraq were intercepted and arrested by an Iranian naval vessel; bin NUFL consequently remained in charge, to the extent that the various D.L.F. bands were in fact centrally organised. During the period 1964-65, mining incidents increased, particularly in the vicinity of the R.A.F. base at Salalah and units of the Sultan's Armed Forces (S.A.F.) were brought into action. However, they failed to quell the dissidents, and by early 1966, a state of guerilla warfare existed. During this year, no less than three incidents occurred when

/S.A.F.....

S.A.F. patrols were ambushed by the D.L.F. and suffered casualties in the course of regular military engagement.

69. The most serious incident in 1966, however, was the attempt to assassinate the Sultan on 26th April when he was inspecting his Dhofar Force near Salalah. He himself escaped injury but in the fracas which followed the attempt, two Pakistani officers were wounded (one dying later of his wounds), two of the Sultan's soldiers were killed and six people were wounded. A number of the mutineers managed to escape into the hills. One of the curiosities of the affair was that on 19th April (a week before the attempt) Al AHRAM in Cairo published a MENA report that the Sultan had been wounded while inspecting troops near Salalah.

70. During one of the three pitched battles mentioned above, one of the best D.L.F. guerilla leaders, Amir bin Ghanim, was killed. Bin NUFL himself was wounded at about the same time, and has been much out of the country since then. After these setbacks, and particularly because of the switch of Saudi policy from supporting the D.L.F. to one of neutrality, the D.L.F.'s scale of activity declined during the second half of 1966 and the first months of 1967. Nevertheless, they have generally been able to muster at any one time about 70 men, all of whom had received military training of some kind, mostly in Iraq, and operate in two or three apparently independent bands. In all, the Iraqis gave military training to about 200 Dhofaris, and it has been estimated that about 130 of them subsequently managed to return in small groups to Dhofar, though not all would have been operating at any one time.

71. The D.L.F. is split into two factions, which follow the fundamental divisions of the Dhofaris themselves along tribal and religious lines. Bin NUFL appears to remain the leader of one of these factions, which draws its support from the Bait Kathir and allied tribes. The other group, led by the D.L.F. propagandist in Cairo, Muhammad al GHASSANI, draws its support from the Qarra. Apart from religious, tribal and personal differences, there is some conflict of policy

/between the...

between the two groups. After the Saudi change of policy towards the D.L.F., and the shortage of supplies which ensued - at one time in 1966 there was evidence that they were also dangerously short of food - bin NUFL renewed earlier overtures which he had made to the Imam in order to obtain arms, and in July 1967 was reported to have agreed to close the independent D.L.F. Office in Cairo and issue a public declaration of support for the Imam in return for supplies. However, this rapprochement came to nothing, possibly because bin NUFL was unable to carry the other Dhofari groups with him, and in their quest for arms the D.L.F. resorted to sending a delegation to Communist China. This delegation is reported to have returned with promises both of arms and of financial aid, though there is no evidence that either has materialised. Bin NUFL, who is thought to have disapproved of this, subsequently made overtures to the Sultan, but these were rejected.

72. GHASSANI, who was never prepared to countenance any degree of subordination to the Imam, belongs to the Qarra tribe which has close links with its neighbours in the Mahra province of the P.R.S.Y. Since the P.R.S.Y. became independent in November 1967, there have been definite indications that the D.L.F. has been receiving assistance from the P.R.S.Y. The decline in D.L.F. activity which had been noted earlier in the year was abruptly reversed, and as of early 1968 the D.L.F. is operating with greater confidence and effectiveness than ever before. Thus the damage caused to the D.L.F. by the cessation of Saudi aid to the Dhofaris has been more than effectively remedied, and Dhofar has now become the most vulnerable as well as the most troubled area in the Gulf. In addition, there have been reports to the effect that the D.L.F. has succeeded in forming a cell organisation among Dhofaris serving in the Trucial Oman Scouts (T.O.S.). However, the activities of these cells have not so far extended beyond fund-raising for the D.L.F., and there has been no evidence to date of direct political activity directed against the British by the Dhofaris within the T.O.S. There are also cells in Abu Dhabi, where a number of Dhofaris serving

/in the local...

in the local police are known to attend meetings. The D.L.F. is also established in Qatar, which appears to be its main base in the Lower Gulf. The headquarters of the "Command Abroad" however, seems to be in Kuwait. The main function of the D.L.F. outside Dhofar appears to be the collection of funds.

73. The U.A.R. authorities have given little effective help to the D.L.F. throughout the four years of its struggle, as they wished to co-ordinate the activities of the various rebel groups and thought in this connection to subordinate the D.L.F. to the Omani rebel movement. (In this, they appear to have made a serious misjudgement of the potential of the two movements.) As of late 1967, however, they seem to have recognised their mistake and Cairo Radio has recently stepped up its propaganda support for the Ghafiri (Qarra) faction of the D.L.F. It is ironical that of all the nationalist movements in the Gulf area, the most successful one is the one which has received a minimum of assistance from Cairo.

74. Sayyid TARIQ

Besides the Omani and Dhofari rebel movements, the Sultan of Muscat is also opposed by his half-brother, Sayyid TARIQ. Since the autumn of 1966, Sayyid TARIQ, who had previously left the Sultanate in protest against his services not being used, and his advice not being taken by the Sultan, publicly declared his intention of overthrowing the Sultan.

75. TARIQ does not claim the throne for himself, stating that he would be content with the office of Prime Minister under a new Sultan, QABUS, the eldest son of the present Sultan. But the draft constitution which TARIQ has prepared would leave QABUS with no more than the title of sovereign, effective power lying in the hands of himself as Prime Minister.

76. TARIQ has not explained how he plans to take power, but he has disclaimed the intention of raising his standard in open revolt, although he claims that if he did so he would

/have overwhelming...

have overwhelming support. Instead, he purports to believe that the Sultan can be overthrown, and forced into exile or, if necessary, assassinated, and he has implied that this will be effected by the Dhofari Rebel Movement, over which he claims to have some authority. But these claims and other claims he makes to have won over many supporters from the Imam's movements, do not carry any conviction; a document produced under the Imam's auspices in November 1967 condemned TARIQ as a British stooge, and Cairo Radio has frequently expressed the same sentiment.

77. Despite his failure to win support from either the Omani or Dhofari rebel movements, TARIQ may not be entirely wrong in claiming to have had assurances of support from some of the important Shaikhs in the Sultanate. These assurances, probably made for no other purpose than that of re-insurance, should not be taken to imply willingness to rise against the Sultan at his bidding. But they do suggest that if the Sultan were to meet with any accident, TARIQ might be well placed to take over power, and perhaps the throne itself.

78. <u>Arab Nationalist Movement (A.N.M.)</u>

In February 1967, it was reported that a small A.N.M. cell had been identified at Izki. Each cell member was responsible for recruiting further members from his own tribe, eight different tribes being represented in the cell. According to later reports A.N.M. cells have also been established in Muscat, Matrah, Sumail and Nizwa. The movement is reported to have had contacts both with Sayyid TARIQ and with the Imam's organisation, but it would seem unlikely that it is controlled by either. Although the movement was first started in the Sultanate by an E.I.S. agent, it is not clear whether it looks to Cairo for inspiration and direction, or whether this - plus financial support - is provided from the K.A.N.M. in Kuwait. Although no activities on the part of the A.N.M. in the Sultanate have come to light since before the June 1967 War, in the absence of any Police Force, let alone a Special Branch in Muscat and Matrah, it is quite probable that subversive movements exist without having come to notice.

OUTSIDE SUPPORT FOR GULF SUBVERSION

U.A.R.

79. Contradictory strains run through the U.A.R.'s policy towards the various nationalist movements. These spring from various causes such as the Egyptians' wish to ensure that time and money spent on these movements is well used, and the natural desire of the local leaders to maintain freedom of action, and therefore freedom from control by Cairo.

80. Muscat and Oman

The most active U.A.R. backing to any rebel movement on record dates from 1959-62, during which time the Omani rebels, having recently been defeated in their attempt to overthrow the Sultan by force of arms, were though in exile, still a force to be reckoned with. During this period the Omanis, under Egyptian supervision, embarked on a series of terrorist activities outside Oman itself. These included the sabotaging of 3 R.A.F. Beverley aircraft, the blowing up in the air of a civilian airliner, the blowing up of the British Bank in Qatar, and the placing of bombs in three British ships, one of which, the 'SS. Dara' sank with the loss of 200 lives.

81. About 1963, the U.A.R. (and Iraq) switched the emphasis of their support to the Omanis to the training of recruits for infiltration into and operating in Muscat. Their original aim was to train and despatch 4,000 men for this purpose, but less than half this number even got as far as training camps, and very few of these ever reached the Oman. Since this date, although polite relations have been maintained with the Imam and his supporters, aid on a substantial scale has stopped, although the U.A.R. still subsidises the Imamate Office in Cairo hoping no doubt through this link to make and maintain contact with Omani malcontents.

82. So far as is known, the U.A.R. has not provided any concrete assistance to the Dhofari rebels who have, for their part, generally succeeded in maintaining their freedom of

/action...

action vis a vis other Arab countries; however, Cairo Radio regularly gives verbal encouragement to the "Dhofar Liberation Front" (D.L.F.), particularly to the Ghafiri faction. A D.L.F. office was opened in Cairo in 1965, and although the Omanis attempted to force the Dhofaris to shut it down in 1967 (since they regarded it as a rival for Egyptian funds), it is still in operation.

83. The Trucial States

Egyptian involvement in the Trucial States dates from the emergence of the indigenous nationalist groups there, with most of whom they have established some degree of connection.

84. The founder of P.O.L.O., Saqr bin SULTAN, the former Ruler of Sharjah was deposed for his pro-U.A.R. attitude and after his fall from power, was financed by the U.A.R. and acted as a talent-spotter for a new subversive organisation for the Trucial States and the Sultanate. In late 1966, a group of 30 Omanis recruited by bin Sultan was promised arms and explosives from the U.A.R. once they had succeeded in entering and establishing themselves in the Trucial States; this condition they failed to accomplish.

85. N.O.T.S. has had very little to do with the Egyptians until 1967 when with the new policy of re-organisation on A.N.M. lines, plans were made for N.O.T.S. members to attend sabotage courses in Cairo; these plans seem to have come to nothing as a result of the June 1967 War.

86. The G.L.F.'s connections with Cairo are the subject of contradictory reports. It has been reported that the G.L.F. was conceived by the Egyptians as far back as late 1965, and that the headquarters were in Cairo. However, this conflicts with the evidence of other reports stating that by November 1967 no headquarters existed in Cairo, although it was hoped to open an office shortly. The constitution itself provided for the setting up of an office in Cairo to administer the affairs of Gulf Youth, but emphasised neither this nor any other branch was to be considered as the Front's Headquarters.

/87. Bahrain....

87. Bahrain

Although the B.N.L.F. is primarily a Communist-orientated group, it has connections with Cairo through a Neutral Zone body, believed to be used for channelling funds from the U.A.R. to the B.N.L.F.; the latter also sent a small group of 15 N.L.F. members for sabotage training to Cairo in autumn 1966. The U.A.R. also gave military training to some B.A.N.M. members in 1963, but since then has only given verbal backing; and received a delegation of the new A.N.M. splinter group, the F.N.F. in Cairo in April 1967.

88. Besides its connections with the B.N.L.F. and the B.A.N.M. the U.A.R. has regularly been reported as being behind the existence of other smaller terrorist groups being formed in Bahrain. In January 1967, the existence of two such groups, one of Yemenis and Adenis some of whom had fought on the Republican side in the Yemen war, and one of the Omanis, was reported; over 100 of the Yemenis with adverse security records were subsequently deported. In addition there was a group of Bahrainis who, though not necessarily B.N.L.F. members, had received sabotage training in the U.A.R. through arrangements made by the B.N.L.F. representative in Cairo.

89. Kuwait

There appears to be little or no open contact between the K.A.N.M. leaders and the U.A.R. Embassy in Kuwait, possibly because the nationalists know that their movements are of interest to the security authorities; any Egyptian guidance given to the Kuwaiti nationalists is more likely to come from Beirut, where expatriate Kuwaitis are known to have social contacts with the Press Attache at the U.A.R. Embassy.

E.I.S. Subversion and Agent Running

90. The only Egyptian mission in the Gulf is the Embassy in Kuwait, an institution which has long had a strong element of E.I.S. officers; during 1967 there were four identified E.I.S. officers there and in early 1968 there were three.

/It seems....

It seems reasonable to assume that these people are concerned with E.I.S. penetration of Gulf political movements and the organisation of sabotage, and that there is a tacit understanding with the Kuwaitis under which such activities are connived at on condition that the interior stability of Kuwait is not disrupted. There have even been reports, though we are not able to substantiate them, to the effect that the Kuwait State Office diplomatic bag has been used as a means of communications between the E.I.S. and the U.A.R. educational mission in Sharjah.

91. We know from intelligence from outside the Gulf that the whole Egyptian foreign intelligence effort has suffered a decline since the June War, and there is no evidence that the British announcement of impending withdrawal from the Gulf has yet given new impetus to Egyptian ambitions there. Although it seems logical that the E.I.S. effort in the Gulf is directed from Kuwait, we have little detailed knowledge of its operations. Two instances which have come to notice are described below.

92. In April 1967 it was reliably reported that three Egyptian school teachers in Ras Al Khaimah were spreading Nasserist and anti-Imperialist views inside and outside the schools and in May U.A.R. school teachers on the Trucial Coast were reported as saying that the Director of the U.A.R. Educational Mission, Muhammad Radiq Abdul Rahman BARQUQI, had been briefed by the E.I.S. to report on a number of specific points. These need not be specified here since it seems doubtful to us whether the particular points of an E.I.S. brief to one of their agents would be accurately circulated amongst U.A.R. school teachers, but BARQUAI's involvement with the E.I.S. would appear to have some probability, the Egyptian school teachers' mission in Sharjah being the only U.A.R. institution in the area. At this time, U.A.R. school teachers were further reported as being in fear of expulsion by the local authorities on account of Barquqi's alleged E.I.S. activities: even without these Egyptian teachers might reasonably expect that an end might eventually be put to their propaganda activities.

/93. There has been....

93. There has been evidence of Egyptian intelligence interest in the R.A.F. installations in Bahrain. Bahrainis visiting Cairo have been liable to interrogation there, and are sometimes invited to report back on the installations through the open post from Bahrain to addressees in Cairo.

IRAQ

94. The Iraqis have shown a sporadic interest in Gulf subversion. Basra is a convenient base for despatching rebels down the Gulf, and the Iraqis have an ordnance base, training facilities and an intelligence headquarters there. Iraqi assistance to subversive movements south of Kuwait - whose independence she recognised belatedly and reluctantly - has varied according to Iraq's economic situation, and also according to the changing regard for the capabilities of the various nationalist movements in the Gulf.

95. The Omanis

The Omani rebels maintain offices in Baghdad and Basra, and there is firm evidence of a sustained effort dating from the second Arab Summit of September 1964 to train and arm Omani and Dhofari guerillas. During 1964-65, nearly a thousand Omanis received military training in camps near Basra and Baghdad. Arms and rebels were shipped by dhow from Basra in 1965. There appears to have been a comparative lull in 1966, but training of Omanis was resumed in 1967, although so far as is known, the recruits have not so far been despatched to the Sultanate. The chief reason for this delay has been disputes over command, the Iraqis now being disillusioned with the quality of leadership offered by the Imam and his supporters and by the fact that so few of their Omani - as opposed to the Dhofari - trainees ever reached their destination. As of the beginning of 1968, there were indications that these differences had been partly resolved, and that some of the recruits might at last be on their way.

96. Dhofar

Iraqi efforts to support the Dhofari rebels have been

more successful, in that the Dhofari movement, largely trained in Iraq, has actually succeeded in waging a guerilla war within the Sultanate. The first batch of Dhofaris to be trained in Iraq in late 1964, numbered about 200 men of whom about 130 are known to have reached Dhofar. Iraqi support fell off in 1965-66 as a consequence of the interception of some of the supplies which they were attempting to send, both by land and sea, to the Dhofari rebels, but we continue to receive occasional reports, the latest one as recent as January 1968, that Dhofaris are receiving military training in Iraq.

97. Bahrain

An approach was made to the Iraqis in April 1965 by three representatives of the B.A.N.M. group in Kuwait to ask for training and arms for activity in Bahrain. Some training was carried out. Subsequently Iraqi Intelligence officers initiated the direct "recruitment of saboteurs and agents" in Bahrain and a course was held from February to June 1966. How far this direct recruitment by the Iraqis formed part of a plan concerted with Bahraini leaders in Kuwait was not clear, but the intended measure of closer Iraqi control over activities which it implied is significant.

98. Trucial States

P.O.L.O.'s early days were nurtured by Iraqi co-operation, and Egyptian direction, and N.O.T.S. was offered training in Iraq during 1967, though this offer fell through owing to the disrupting influence of the June war. Basically Iraq had not considered nationalist movements in the Trucial States as of sufficient stature to make aid to them worthwhile.

99. Kuwait

No links have been discovered between the Iraqi authorities and the opposition nationalists in Kuwait. This may well be due to the fact that although the Iraqis have relinquished their territorial claims in Kuwait and recognised it as an independent state, there is considerable suspicion in Kuwait

/about the....

about the Iraqi sincerity in this respect. It is not possible to say whether the Kuwaiti nationalists avoid contact with the Iraqis because they, equally with the Kuwaiti authorities, disapprove of Iraq's ambitions against Kuwait, or whether simply for fear of arousing the attention of the Kuwait Security Authorities.

SYRIA

100. The defeat of the U.A.R. in the June War, the consequent decline of President NASSER's prestige and the ensuing financial stringency which curtailed U.A.R. activities in the Gulf has led to an increase in Syria's importance in this field. Before the June War, Syria's only contribution to Gulf subversion had been the provision of military and subversive training to various batches of recruits. This had been done on a fairly considerable scale, for instance by the end of 1965 it was estimated that some 900 Omanis had received training; their training is reported to have included the laying of mines and explosives, battle-training and the use of anti-aircraft guns. Since the June War there have been further military courses, though it may be significant that the Imamate Office in Damascus has been reported as complaining that more attention has been paid to indoctrinating these students with Ba'athist teaching than with military affairs.

101. One of Syria's big assets has been the presence in Damascus of Abdul Aziz SHAMLAN, a Bahraini Ba'athist who has been instrumental in arranging for young Bahrainis who arrive in Syria to follow educational courses in Russia and Eastern Europe. He has also made arrangements with the Syrian authorities for other Bahraini exiles arriving in Damascus to receive military training in Syria.

102. In the autumn of 1967, a number of Bahraini students returned home from Syria, and in some cases from Eastern Europe, and were largely responsible for the considerable increase in Ba'athist activities which occurred in Bahrain at that time. These Bahrainis clearly look to Damascus rather than to Cairo for their inspiration, although there is no evidence that the Syrian authorities have tried to

/exert....

exert close control over them.

103. It may be partly for this reason that from Bahrain to Dhofar the Nationalist Movements are increasingly looking to Damascus for inspiration, sympathy and assistance. Syria's political alignment with the U.S.S.R. has not so far proved a handicap; on the contrary, some young Gulf nationalists consider it a positive attraction, while others who have visited Damascus and Cairo have expressed a preference for the former on the grounds that Syrian surveillance was not so close. Another reason for this turning towards Syria is that it is the Syrians, in the form of FATAH/ASSIFA, who appear to leading the guerilla and terrorist activities against Israel. Among organisations composed of young nationalists, this extremism automatically makes Syria popular, and is one cause of the recent upsurge of support for the Ba'ath Party.

SOVIET UNION

104. Although some of the subversive movements in the Gulf are Left-Wing and even Communist-orientated, there has been little evidence of contact between them and the Soviet Embassy in Kuwait which is the only Russian outpost in the area. Indeed, the only form of assistance on the part of the Soviet Union which has come to notice has been its willingness to provide facilities for young intellectuals to attend study courses in Soviet Russia and elsewhere in Eastern Europe; recruits for these courses, mostly Bahrainis have generally been introduced to the Russians in Damascus by Abdul Aziz SHAMLAN, the Bahraini Ba'athist who lives in exile there.

105. In the absence of hard intelligence, this reticence on the part of the Russians can only be explained in speculative terms. First, their presence even in Kuwait is still comparatively novel, and they are probably still feeling their way. Secondly, they may well feel that the time to get involved is after independence - as with the P.R.S.Y. - or after the British withdrawal. A third reason for biding

/their time....

their time could be a reluctance to commit themselves to any one movement, and thus risk antagonising others, before assessing the respective strengths of the various groups. Finally, they may well feel that time is on their side, and that meanwhile their policy is being satisfactorily implemented, especially by Syria, whose leadership of the Ba'athist movement would seem at the moment to represent the most useful card in the Moscow hand.

COMMUNIST CHINA

106. Chinese contacts with the Gulf have been on a small scale. A certain amount of propaganda material (posters, badges and an illustrated magazine containing photographs of alleged British brutality in Hong Kong) has been circulated in the Trucial States. There have also been occasional instances of Gulf youths being given study facilities, and sometimes military training, in China. So far as is known these facilities have been granted on an ad hoc basis, rather than by arrangement with the leaders of any particular subversive organisation.

107. As might be expected, only the most militant of Gulf movements, the Dhofari Liberation Front, seems to have made any impression on the Chinese. In September 1967 a D.L.F. delegation visited Peking and is reliably reported to have returned with promises of arms supplies and other assistance to the value of 10,000 dollars. At the time it was reported that the arms would be despatched by way of Tanzania, but since November 1967 this would seem to be an unnecessary complication with the route through Aden also available.

SAUDI ARABIA

108. Saudi Arabia has never had any interest in the more sophisticated movements of the North, but did until about 1965 provide assistance to both the Omani and the Dhofari opponents of the Sultan of Muscat with whom King FAISAL has long been on unfriendly terms. This assistance took the form of supplying arms and, in the case of the Omanis but

/not so far....

not so far as is known the Dhofaris, of giving military training to rebel recruits. In addition, Saudi Arabia has provided asylum, including free accommodation and pensions, for the Imam and his leading supporters ever since they were forced into exile.

109. Although this hospitality still continues - in 1967, the Saudis even issued a postage stamp to honour the Omani cause - the military aid has been allowed to run down as relations between Saudi Arabia and the U.K. have improved. Saudi assurances to HMG to stop the supply of arms to dissidents operating in Oman did not immediately become fully effective, but this may have been largely due to friction between RIYADH and the Provincial authorities. However, the traffic can be said to have petered out since the deathof Jiluwi in March 1967, the governor of the Eastern Province, and important patron of the Omani rebel cause. Although as recently as October 1966 a batch of 50 Omanis were given military training in Taif, they were never actually despatched to the Oman, and it may well have been King FAISAL's intention all along to ensure that they would not be sent.

110. Arms convoys to Dhofar from, or at any rate, through Saudi Arabia, took place regularly throughout the first nine months of 1965. The change in Saudi policy then began to take effect and the scale of assistance decreased. Only one convoy was reported in 1966 and one in 1967; at least one other was turned back at the Saudi border by the Saudis themselves. The change of Saudi policy was a bitter blow to the D.L.F. and was acknowledged as such in a secret document of theirs printed in Cairo and dated 12th December 1966, which states that the Front "could definitely not rely upon this sisterly Arab State to continue its support for the struggle in Dhofar". Fortunately for the Dhofaris, the P.R.S.Y. has subsequently more than made good the deficit.

P.R.S.Y.

111. There is no evidence that the Government of P.R.S.Y.

/has yet....

has yet come, or considered coming, to the support of subversive movements in the Gulf except for the D.L.F. The latter now have increased freedom of movement and action in the former E.A.P. and particularly in the border province of Mahra whose inhabitants are ethnically and linguistically akin to the people of Dhofar. Since the independence of P.R.S.Y. there has been firm evidence of P.R.S.Y. harbouring parties of the Dhofar rebels, and of requests by the latter for military equipment and training. But there are more indications of P.R.S.Y. apprehensions (ill-founded) of aggression against themselves by the S.A.F. than there are of active support for the D.L.F.

181.

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CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX
TO
JIC(68) 13TH MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 21ST MARCH 1968

5. CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

(Previous reference: JIC(67) 54th Meeting, Minute 4) - 169.

SIR HAROLD MACGUIRE said that the Chiefs of Staff wished to know how matters stood on the proposal that the consular post at Basra be re-opened to provide facilities for the collection of intelligence relevant to our commitment to support Kuwait and possible threats to our position elsewhere in the Gulf. Although this had been suggested by the Defence Intelligence Staff and endorsed by the Committee, he was uncertain whether in the light of subsequent policy decisions the requirement justified the expenditure.

The CHAIRMAN said that re-establishment of the Consulate General would involve the provision of four UK based officers and nineteen locally recruited staff and the annual cost would be of the order of £20,000 - £30,000. The Diplomatic Service Administration Office were not prepared to accept this as a charge on their Vote. In view of the policy decisions announced by the Prime Minister on 16th January and current pressure for economies, he thought the Committee would take the view that the expenditure was not worth while. He proposed that the agreement of the Chiefs of Staff should be sought for this view.

The Committee -

(1) Took note with approval of the Chairman's remarks.

(2) Invited the Defence Intelligence Staff to take action accordingly.

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Joint Intelligence Staff
HQ British Forces Gulf
BFPO 63

JIG (Gulf) 2/68

5th March 1968

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See Distribution:

THE THREAT TO BAHRAIN AS AT 1st MARCH 1968

Please find attached copy of JIG (Gulf) paper 2/68.

FILE.

(R.G. GRIFFITHS)
Wing Commander
Secretary JIG (Gulf)

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JIG(GULF) 2/67

March 1968

THE THREAT TO BAHRAIN AS AT 1ST MARCH 1968

1. Short History. The island of Bahrain was conquered by Sheikh Ahmed bin Khalifah from the Persians in 1782, the present ruler being the eleventh Sheikh of the Khalifah to rule Bahrain. The island has been in treaty relations with Her Majesty's Government since 1820. The modern development of the island dates from 1926 when a British Adviser was appointed to the Sheikh of Bahrain; oil was discovered in commercial quantities in 1933 and royalties have been paid to the Bahrain government from that date. Since then these royalties have been used to develop an Arab welfare state.

2. Geographical Description. The Sheikhdom of Bahrain consists of an archipelago of six low-lying islands in the Gulf some 20 miles off the east coast of Saudi Arabia and just west of the Qatar Peninsula. Bahrain island, the largest of the group, is about 30 miles from North to South and nearly 10 miles wide in the north, tapering southwards. It is joined to Muharraq, the second largest island, by a 1½ mile long causeway. Bahrain island consists mainly of a low limestone plateau with an oval shaped depression in its centre which is surrounded by low limestone cliffs. Several steep hills rise from the centre of the depression, reaching 350 ft to 450 ft high. The greater part of the island is desert with dry wadis and several areas of salt marsh, especially in the West and South; there are considerable areas under cultivation in the north. Muharraq island is low and sandy with a few gardens; the airfield and Muharraq town occupy the largest part of the island. The other islands of the archipelago contain little population and are mainly desert. The Huwar islands off the West coast of Qatar are a continual cause of political discord between Bahrain and Qatar but are desert islands of small economic and no agricultural importance.

3. The Political and Constitutional Position. Bahrain is an independent Arab state ruled by HH Sheikh Isa bin Sulman Al Khalifah. The government of the island is on a two-tier basis, namely the Ruler operating through the Majlis with an infrastructure of western type government departments. There are also municipal councils in Manama, Muharraq and Rifaa and advisory committees to the main departments of government to which members of the public are co-opted. Many of the principal government appointments are held by members of the Ruling family. Government is benevolent and reasonably efficient by Arab standards; there is, however, no genuine popular representation. The press is controlled by a fairly stringent press law and Trade Unions, although envisaged in the Labour Law, have never been allowed to form. Under special treaties Her Majesty's Government is responsible for the conduct of Bahrain's foreign relations and is also responsible for her external defence. HMG also has jurisdiction over non-Arab foreigners in Bahrain and responsibility for civil aviation. In order to modernise its relationsnip with the Bahrainis HMG is in the process of retroceding these residual

/powers.

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powers. The Political Agency is, for working purposes, the medium through which both foreign and defence affairs are conducted.

The Economic Situation in Bahrain

4. The Oil Industry. The government revenue of the island is heavily dependent on oil production and the refinery. The Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) is a company registered in Canada but owned by the Caltex group of America. The Bahrain government receives about £5.25M in oil revenue annually. BAPCO currently employs about 800 expatriates, mostly Indian and British, and about 5,500 local nationals. The refinery, which has an annual throughput of some 10 million tons of crude oil, is heavily dependent on crude oil supplied from Saudi Arabia. The Bahrain oilfield south of Awali only produces $3\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of crude yearly. By modern standards the BAPCO operation is old fashioned and employs a large labour force which, for political reasons, cannot be reduced as long as there are no other large industries on the island to absorb the surplus labour. The expatriate labour force is now much smaller than before and will finally reduce to about 200 within the next two or three years. This is barely sufficient to maintain the refining of oil produced from the Bahrain field alone and the Ruler will not allow BAPCO to reduce their expatriate staff below this limit. BAPCO are well aware of the need for industrial diversification and efforts are being made to attract other industries. However the willingness of industrialists to invest large sums in the island is heavily dependent on the prospects for internal stability.

5. Commerce. Bahrain depends much on commerce and apart from those employed by the oil company a large proportion of the population is engaged in wholesale or retail trading. In 1966 goods valued at BD 42 million were imported whilst re-exports, to Saudi Arabia and neighbouring Gulf States, amounted to BD 12.5 million. However Bahrain's position as a transit port is threatened by the development of other ports and airfields in the Gulf notably Al Khobar in Saudi Arabia and Dubai and Abu Dhabi in the Trucial States.

6. Local Industry. There are a number of other local industries eg, ship repairing, building-material factories, and soft-drink factories but they are insufficient to absorb the large number of young school leavers. It is essential therefore that other industries are attracted to the island and that they are labour intensive. Current plans are under discussion for the establishment of an aluminium smelting works, a tanker graving dock, and a cement factory.

The Local Population

7. The Indigenous Population. In 1965, the last year for which figures are available, the population of Bahrain was 182,000 including some 38,000 foreign nationals. The indigenous Arab population is divided into two religious factions, Shia and Sunni. The Shia are descended from the original inhabitants of the island and live mostly in the villages along the North coast and in certain quarters of Manama. They are slightly the numerical majority and tend to regard themselves as somewhat of an oppressed class. The Sunni Arabs are descended from those who came to Bahrain during the 18th Century and subsequently; the Ruling family are in this group. There are also a number of negro descendents of former slave stock.

/8. Population

8. Population Increase. In 1959 the population was 143,000; in 1965 it was 182,000; now, at the same rate of increase, it must be approximately 200,000. It is estimated that 70% of the population is aged thirty or under and many of these have received some form of secondary education. Increasing numbers of students are educated in North Arab universities. There are some 50,000 children currently in the schools who will come on to the labour market during the next five years or so. Unemployment is currently about 3.8% of a total Bahraini workforce of approximately 35,000.

9. The Expatriate Population. Apart from Europeans, the expatriate population comprises Muscatis, Omanis, Indians, Pakistanis, Iranians, Yemenis and a small number of Northern Arabs. In 1965 the total expatriate population was just over 38,000 and has probably not increased much since then through illegal immigration. For historical reasons there is a considerable amount of latent tension between Bahrainis and Iranians, which shows itself in times of crisis. There is also some pressure by Bahrainis - who face a considerable under-employment problem - towards Europeans and Asians who occupy coveted white collar and managerial posts. In general the expatriate population are better behaved than the indigenous population, since bad behaviour brings the risk of deportation.

The Aim

10. The aim of this paper is to assess the threat to British interests in the Sheikhdom of Bahrain at the 1st March 1968.

British Interests

11. Political. The principal raison d'etre for the British presence in the Gulf has been to ensure the general stability of the area, so that the peaceful development of the small states can be fostered. Concurrent with this has been the economic requirement of ensuring that the oil production of the Gulf remains freely available to the Western world.

12. These Gulf-wide aims applied equally to Bahrain and have been given added point by the fact the HM Political Resident in the Gulf is based on the island. It has been HMG's intention to modernise their relationship with the Bahrain Government by retroceding jurisdiction over expatriates and other residual powers to the Bahrain Government as soon as the Ruler felt able to undertake them. This process will now have to be accelerated by HMG's announced intention of withdrawing from the Gulf by the end of 1971.

13. Military. British military interests in Bahrain are threefold. Firstly, the Commander British Forces Gulf and the three Service commanders are located in Jufair adjacent to the Political Residency; secondly, small naval, army and air forces are based on the island for operational tasks in CBFG's area of responsibility; thirdly, RAF Muharraq is an important staging airfield on the air route to the Far East. These facilities could not easily be reproduced elsewhere in the Gulf, should we, for any reason, be denied them. It is important to remember that these forces are in Bahrain by agreement with the Ruler, who could repudiate the agreement if political pressures were so intense that the presence of British military forces became an

/acute

acute embarrassment to him. Forces stationed on the island are located as follows (see sketch map):

a. Muharraq.

(1) RAF Station.

(2) Army minor units.

b. Jufair Compound.

(1) Headquarters British Forces Gulf.

(2) HMS Jufair.

(3) RN Ships, resident and visiting.

(4) HQ Bahrain Garrison.

c. Sulmaniya Compound. Administrative branches of:

(1) Headquarters Land Forces Gulf.

(2) Headquarters Air Forces Gulf.

d. Hamala Camp.

(1) Resident Infantry.

(2) Battalion Group.

(3) RAF Radar Unit.

e. Married Accommodation. The 650 Service married families allowed on the island are accommodated almost entirely in the Qudhaibiya, Sulmaniya and Jufair districts and are purposely located well away from the main Arab population in Manama and Muharraq. However unlike the military areas in sub-paragraphs a.-d. inclusive, the quarters are widely scattered.

14. Commercial. Bahrain imports from the United Kingdom 23% of her total imports; in 1966 this was worth some BD 9.25 million. In addition to this, two of the largest banks are British and British firms participate in most of the leading commercial enterprises on the island. British commercial interest in the island is therefore large when seen in Bahraini terms but small when related to the total British export effort.

Effects of the British Presence

15. The reaction to the presence of a British force on Bahrain has varied greatly. The ruling family have welcomed it, since to some extent it underwrites their position internally whilst externally it has delayed the day when they will have to sail unaided in the stormy waters of international politics. The merchant class also have welcomed the economic advantages it has brought in terms of increased trade and rents from property. The vast majority of the educated younger population identify themselves with some form of Pan-Arabism and are by definition hostile

/to

to what they regard as British imperialism. They are, however, dismayed by the British decision to withdraw since they regard the British military presence not so much as an occupying force, but as a protection against Iranian or Saudi domination. Individual acts of hostility towards the armed forces have been few and of a minor nature, such as the occasional stoning of military vehicles. However, the Bahrainis are highly susceptible to outside pressures and a sustained propaganda campaign from eg, Cairo, could change this relatively favourable atmosphere whilst an issue either local or Pan-Arab in which the local population believes, or is led to believe that British and Arab interests are opposed, is likely to produce hostile reaction and to be exploited by the local subversive organisations. Indeed events outside Bahrain are more likely to spark off trouble vis a vis the services than events within it, provided the British military presence remains unobtrusive and unfortunate incidents between British servicemen and local Arabs are few and tactfully handled when they occur.

16. The build up of British forces in the island has not in itself been very large, but it has involved a sizeable building programme and a noticeable increase in military activity; these have been observed by the local population. The British military presence in the Gulf has also attracted a slight increase in hostile propaganda broadcasts from the Voice of the Arabs and Radio Damascus. However it was noticeable in June 1967 that the presence of the British infantry battalion was a steadying factor and a deterrent to subversive elements on the island. This beneficial effect would be reversed were the battalion actually to be employed to suppress an internal security situation particularly if the issue were one in which Arab and British interests were divided.

17. Naturally the presence of British forces has had an effect on the economy of the island. The three Services and MPBW employ about 1,900 Arabs (only a small proportion of these are Bahrainis) and spend about £5 million annually in the island. (The annual value of the island's economy is approximately £30M). The main adverse effect of the withdrawal on the economy seems likely to be on the indirect benefits which have derived from the military presence, eg, taxis, electricity consumption, the general level of business activity etc. The actual number of Bahrainis directly employed by the Services is small and the number of landlords involved in hirings probably less than fifty.

Local Subversive Movements

18. General. As open political activity in Bahrain is banned, any opposition to the regime is obliged to remain covert. There are three major and a number of minor opposition groups all contemplating subversion in varying degrees of intensity.

19. The Bahrain Arab Nationalist Movement (BANM). This movement began in the late 1950s mainly in the secondary schools and student groups. In 1962/3 the BANM was disrupted by the Bahrain Special Branch and some of the leaders left Bahrain for Kuwait where they have since continued to plot against the regime. In the spring of 1965 the BANM was behind fairly serious rioting on the island and was again disrupted by the Special Branch. The BANM is a mainly Sunni movement, urban in character, and looks for its membership among the educated and youthful members of the

/population

population, many of whom work in BAPCO and in the schools. It is about 400-500 strong but only a small minority are hard core activists. The movement has looked to Kuwait and Cairo for direction and its leadership is not particularly impressive. However it has shown in the past a considerable facility for getting large crowds out on the streets. It is well penetrated by the Special Branch and has been quiescent for the past few months. From time to time the BANM has attempted to co-ordinate its activities with the Bahrain National Liberation Front. The BANM is split into a dozen or so rival factions; there is no effective central leadership.

20. The Bahrain National Liberation Front (BNLF). This movement first came to notice in the early 1960s. It obtains most of its support from the Shia and is found mainly in the villages on the North coast. It is the most coherent of the Bahrain nationalist movements and also the most secure. It is influenced by Communist/Ba'athist ideology and has links to 'bloc' countries and also Iraq and the UAR, who in the autumn of 1966 gave sabotage training to 15 of its members. In 1967 the NLF indulged in little overt public activity and played little part in the demonstrations of June 1967. It has concentrated in building up its clandestine political organisation, arranging for trips behind the Iron Curtain (expected to take place in 1968) for its members for education in Soviet Bloc universities, attendance at communist youth jamborees and, possibly, further sabotage training. It has a nominal membership of some 500.

21. The Ba'ath. This party was dormant for many years until mid-1967 since when it has become much more active and has increased its membership from about 30 to 140. Its ideology is difficult to distinguish from that of the NLF but it has firm links to Syria and receives support and direction from Damascus. There is evidence that Bahraini Ba'athists are responsible for an increase in the level of Ba'athist activity in Qatar and the Trucial States and that Bahrain is regarded by Damascus as the central point for Ba'athism in the Gulf. In general, Ba'athism attracts a higher intellectual level of recruits than the BNM or NLF and is free from sectarian overtones. Increased Syrian influence, through Ba'athist channels, in the Gulf would be an unwelcome development.

22. Other Subversive Groups.

a. Front of Nationalist Forces. This is basically a group of the BANM attempting to combine all nationalist groups in Bahrain under one banner. It first appeared in December 1966 and seems to have had some success.

b. Bahrain Students Union. This group is closely tied to the BNM. Its principal branch is in Cairo and though it has had support from the UAR authorities, it also has had its Cairo office closed because of its political activities. The Students Union is regarded by the BNM as a forcing ground for its own membership, and the Students Union leaders are also prominent NM supporters.

23. The Egyptian Intelligence Service (EIS). There is little current evidence of EIS activity in Bahrain but undoubtedly the future security of the island, and indeed of the Gulf as a whole depends a great deal on the intentions of the UAR and the

/activities

activities of the EIS. As long as Nasser is dependent on King Faisal of Saudi Arabia for financial aid and continues to renounce foreign adventures in favour of economic reconstruction within Egypt, the prospects of a UAR inspired subversive campaign against Bahrain appear to be small. Once Nasser is no longer dependent financially on Saudi Arabia, the rule of the Al Saud could be his first target. The collapse of the Al Saud regime would seriously threaten the traditional regimes in the Gulf. Should Nasser's mantle fall on either Syrian or South Arabian shoulders then Bahrain might be in greater danger, but neither has the inspirational call of Nasser. The EIS do not so far seem to have supplied any of the Bahrain subversive groups with a significant quantity of either arms or demolition materials, but they have trained a small number in sabotage techniques. In November 1966 a group of 15 NLF were trained but fortunately were exposed shortly after arrival in Bahrain. The EIS have also attempted to gather information about RAF Muharraq and other service installations.

24. An Assessment of the Subversive Capabilities in Bahrain. On the face of it there are nearly a thousand Bahrainis involved in or at least sympathetic with one or other of the subversive movements. This is not a new factor but has been so since the late 1950s. The number of hard core activists who might initiate a terrorist campaign perhaps total a hundred. The previous pattern of activity in Bahrain has been one of demonstrations, some acts of arson and intimidation of shopkeepers and workers. One very successful and three other rather ineffective attempts at sabotage were made between March 1966 and February 1967. There have been no such incidents since Manama and Muharraq have in the past been centres for mob activity and the Political Agency and the Causeway are favourite venues for demonstrations to gather. Crowds of youths also have stoned military vehicles in these areas and on the road to the airfield. Mobs have not so far entered the predominantly European dwelling areas, perhaps because they are out of the main areas of Arab population. A march on Jufair although threatened in June 1967 failed to materialise. Undoubtedly among the subversive hard core there are some individuals who, if suitably inspired and given the necessary materials, could mount effective sabotage attacks against service installations, government utility services, and installations belonging to BAPCO, a number of whose employees are supporters of subversive organisations. The Arabs being what they are, no particular logic would govern their actions. However at the time of writing no evidence has been received to suggest that the political choice to initiate a terrorist campaign has yet been taken by the local nationalists.

The Security Forces

25. The Uniformed Branch. The Bahrain Police force is about a thousand strong and is organised along the usual lines. There are plans to expand the force and to provide a separate riot squad of about 250 men. By Gulf standards the force is reasonably efficient but less so than similar police forces in East Africa or the Far East. The rank and file of the force are largely non-Bahraini Arab mercenaries from the Arabian Peninsula. There is a large Yemeni element but this is decreasing. The key positions are held by British officers. Morale is reasonable and relations with the general public much improved. However the force is vulnerable to subversion and a succession of terrorists attacks against police posts might quickly reduce morale and effectiveness. It is important to remember that the internal security of the island remains the responsibility of the Bahrain Government and

/therefore

therefore the Bahrain State Police would have to bear the initial brunt of an internal security situation. British troops would only be called in to support the police as the last resort.

26. The Special Branch. The Bahrain Special Branch under Chief Superintendent Henderson has reached a high state of efficiency, after its severe disruption in March 1966, and is abreast of the subversive organisations. However there is a danger that its very success will provoke the subversive groups into violent action against it; it is probably therefore most likely to be the first target of any concentrated terrorist campaign. Although its reorganisation has been designed to take this into account the key figures of the organisation are necessarily vulnerable and their elimination would be a severe blow to the morale of the police. Confidence on the island is a brittle thing and a successful series of assassinations could shatter it.

Conclusion as to the Threat

27. Bahrain is faced with severe demographic and economic problems as a result of her high birthrate and the relative stagnation of the economy but these are not likely to come to a head within the next year. The large pool of unemployed and educated youth will be a natural field for subversion, if new industries cannot be developed to employ them.

28. The economic effects of the British presence on the island is not sufficiently large to alleviate materially the island's economic problems but the proposed withdrawal by 1971 will not only have a directly adverse effect on the economy but could also shake the confidence of potential foreign investors.

29. The political effects of the British military presence are mixed; it is interesting that the announcement of an impending withdrawal has dismayed the nationalists nearly as much as the sheikhs and merchants.

30. Currently the Bahrain Special Branch are abreast of the subversive organisation; the hard core of which have yet to mount any effective programme of terrorism and probably continue to lack the outside direction necessary to do so. It is too early to speculate how the subversive organisations will react to our decision to withdraw. The possibility cannot be excluded that they will make their bid for power while we are still here but much depends on the attitude of the UAR, Syria and perhaps PRSY. The increase in the Ba'ath party is an unwelcome development in view of their Syrian connections.

31. Events outside Bahrain are more likely to cause trouble than events within it in the coming year. The most obvious would be resumption of full scale hostilities between the Arabs and Israel, which would certainly have a reaction in the island. However recent incidents in Jordan and on the Canal have not produced a reaction in Bahrain. As long as Egypt remains preoccupied with the aftermath of the June war, and King Faisal of Saudi Arabia maintains his present ascendance in Arabian Peninsula affairs, the island should remain quiet. However a resurgence of activity by the EIS could bring trouble quite quickly. Events in South West Arabia have not made much impression so far in Bahrain.



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JIC Reg 179

J/326/1

29th February 1968.

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

178.

Thank you for your letter (S/JIC/4060 of 28th February) on the above subject. I think it would be appropriate for you to send the Secretariat thirty copies of the draft report and 100 copies of the final version.

2. I would, however, appreciate some guidance on what distribution is recommended for the draft and whether you want Departments invited to send comments straight to you or by way of the Secretariat/JIS complex. I presume that eventually the report will be cleared out of Committee, as was its predecessor.

(D.J. FEWTRELL)

THIS IS A COPY. THE ORIGINAL IS RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3 (4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

c/o Sir Dick White.

178

LONDON, S.E.1.

28th February, 1968.

8/JIC/4060

RECEIVED
26 FEB 1968 (9)
J. I. C. (A)

Mr. D. J. Fewtrell,
J.I.C. Secretariat.

326/1

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITY IN THE PERSIAN GULF

f.122.

We are now nearing completion of the draft of the up-dated version of our paper on "Subversive Activity in the Persian Gulf" (JIC(66)80 (Final)) and would like to know how many copies the JIC would like for circulation.

f.110.

2. Of the previous paper 30 copies of the draft were sent to the JIC (our 8/JIC/2869 of 15 November 1966 refers) and eventually 100 copies of the Final version. Would you please let us know whether the same numbers will suffice for the new paper, or whether it would be more convenient if we sent one master copy for reproduction in the JIC Secretariat.

cc/Sec 2

JIC Reg

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EXTRACT FROM J. I. C. (68) 9th MEETING HELD ON 22. 2. 68. 175

Extract from Min 7. Requirements for JIC Reports 326/1 339/1.

Secondly, an examination was required of the possible effects on British oil interests and supplies of conditions in the Gulf following our military withdrawal. This assessment would contribute to the inter-departmental discussion on the required future capacity of oil storage facilities in this country taking account of the possibility of a disruption of our Gulf supplies.

In addition, and because of the current discussion of our future policy in the Gulf, there was a requirement to proceed with the projected report on Buraimi. In accordance with the wishes of the Committee (JIC(68) 8th Meeting, Minute 7) he had discussed the draft Terms of Reference for this report with the Foreign Office Department concerned. He suggested that if the basic assumptions for the report were made more flexible by introducing the possibility that the Trucial Sheikdoms would not necessarily act in concert after our withdrawal the draft Terms of Reference would be more realistic.

(b) The Defence Intelligence Staff would wish to confirm that sufficient [illegible] proposed report on the future of British interests and supplies in in the Gulf. ~~If, however, such a report was feasible, it was agreed that the draft Terms of Reference prepared in anticipation by the JIS were appropriate.~~

(c) Although the assumptions on which the projected report on Buraimi must be based were capable of further debates, it was important to initiate this study now as an assessment of the future balance of forces in this area was an important element in the formation of our policy for the Gulf. The report should be written on the basis of the suggested amendment to the draft Terms of Reference.

(2) Subject to confirmation by the DIS of the resources available for the task, instructed the Chairman JIS to arrange for the preparation of a report ~~on the basis of the agreed Terms of Reference~~ on the possible effects of British oil interests and supplies of conditions in the Gulf following our military withdrawal.

(3) Instructed the Chairman JIS to prepare a report on the basis of the amended Terms of Reference agreed by the Committee on Saudi Arabian intentions and capabilities with regard to Buraimi.

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SECRET

326/1.

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7. BURAIMI

(Previous reference: JIC(68) 7th Meeting, Minute 3) / 173.

The Committee had before them Draft Terms of Reference prepared by the JIS for a proposed report on"Saudi Arabian Intention and Capabilities with regard to Buraimi".

MR. CRICK said that, in accordance with the Committee's instructions, he had held a meeting with representatives from the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office to discuss the feasibility of a report on Buraimi taking into account the difficulty of producing realistic assumptions about the likely military and political situation following our withdrawal. The Draft Terms of Reference included the assumptions proposed by the Foreign Office and a suggested framework for the report which would review not only the relative capabilities of the armed forces of Saudi Arabia, Muscat and Oman and Abu Dhabi, but also the wider issues of likely future political developments and the implications for British and American oil interests.

In the following discussion the point was made that the assumptions set out in the Draft Terms of Reference appeared too arbitrary, and that if any proper assessment of the possible outcome of a future military conflict over Buraimi was to be attempted it was essential to have available a reasoned estimate of the likely political situation.

The Committee -

Took note with approval of the Chairman's intention of examining the Draft Terms of Reference for the report with the Foreign Office Department concerned.

SECRET

3. BURAIMI 326/1

The Committee had before them a minute by the Joint Intelligence Staff proposing in response to a Foreign Office request a report on Saudi Arabian intentions and capabilities with regard to Buraimi.

In support of this proposal, the point was made that Departments would find it helpful to have an assessment of the likely outcome of a conflict over Buraimi between Saudi Arabia on the one hand and Abu Dhabi and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman on the other as guidance in forming policy up to, and after, the withdrawal of British forces. Apart from reviewing the military balance between Saudi Arabia and States in the Lower Gulf, the report could usefully examine the wider issues of likely political developments consequent on the rundown of our forces, and the significance of Buraimi in relation to Saudi interests, as well as American and British oil interests.

On the other hand, it was pointed out that the preparation of the report would involve the examination of a hypothetical situation and would in part rest upon major assumptions, at present by no means firm, regarding the future extent of our military support for the Gulf States.

The CHAIRMAN, in summing up the discussion, said that because of the number of uncertainties involved the preparation of the report might be premature: for the same reason the Committee had recently agreed to delay a similar report on the outlook for the Persian Gulf. Further discussion between DIS, the Foreign Office, and the JIS was required. The intelligence aspects of the problem could conveniently be discussed at the next meeting of the JIC Working Party on the intelligence implications of recently announced policy decisions.

The Committee -

Instructed the Chairman JIS to act as proposed in the Chairman's summing up and to report further to the Committee.

172

EXTRACT FROM C. O. C. (68) 6th MEETING HELD ON 1.2.68.

Extract from Item 2. JIC with projected.

(b) Britain and the Persian Gulf: The Next Two Years

The preparation of this projected report would need to be further deferred until the likely consequences and implications of recent policy decisions on the area had been fully examined.

326/1.
339/1

171

EXTRACT FROM J. I. C. (68) 1st MEETING HELD ON 4.1.68.

Extract from Item 3. JIC WIH + projected.

(a) Britain and the Persian Gulf

326/1.

339/1

In view of the current political discussions on our future policy in the area it would be inappropriate to proceed with the preparation of the report at this time. The requirement should however be re-examined in the light of the consequences for intelligence of any decisions taken on our future presence in the Gulf.

170a.

SECRET

(A) (O) (A)

R.J. 5545/145/10

COUNTER SUBVERSION COMMITTEE

WORKING GROUP ON THE PERSIAN GULF (INCLUDING KUWAIT)

Record of a meeting held in the Foreign Office on 12 December, 1967.

Present:

Mr. M.S. Weir	F.O. (Arabian Department) (in the Chair)
Mr. M.C.S. Weston	F.O. (Arabian Department)
Colonel H.N.H. Wild	Ministry of Defence
Group Captain I.S. Stockwell, RAF	Ministry of Defence
Mrs. A.C. Elwell	F.O./C.O. (I.R.D.)
Mr. I.P.M. Smith	F.O./C.O. (I.R.D.)
Mr. D.W. Warren-Knott	F.O. (C.R.D.)
Mr. B.R. Pridham	F.O./C.O. (J.I.P.G.D.)
Mr. A.J.A. Douglas	Ministry of Overseas Development
Mr. P. McKearney	F.O. (P.U.S.D.)
Representative of our friends	
Mr. S.A. Lockhart	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.
Mr. F.T. Copeland	Joint Secretary, C.S.C.

GENERAL REVIEW

Political: The Chairman said that the security situation in the Gulf had remained comparatively quiet since August this year. The redeployment of troops back to the U.K., and to the Gulf, to reinforce our position there, had gone very well. A disturbing development had been the subversive effect of British press comment casting doubt on our intention to remain in the Gulf. We had done our best to get press comment back on the rails. These efforts were beginning to show results, and since our withdrawal from Aden there were signs that pessimistic comment about the Gulf was losing fashionable appeal.

2. The recent visit of the Minister of State to the Gulf States, in the course of which he had met all the Rulers, including the Sultan at Sulalah, had given the Rulers the re-assurance they needed about our intention to remain in the Gulf as long as necessary to maintain stability. It was hoped that the States would draw closer together, although this perhaps was a tidier pattern than was realistic to expect, and was not an essential element in our policy. We still hoped for closer links between the Protected States and Iran, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Kuwaiti Minister of Foreign Affairs was planning to visit the States after

/Ramadhan.

Ramadhan. He would discover that, contrary to what he seemed to think, it was the Rulers, and not the British, who were wary of this. An important factor was how far the new Government in South Arabia would try to carry their revolutionary banner. Bellicose talk in Geneva had not so far been resulted in action.It was still possible that they might send armed dhows to try to capture the Kuria Muria islands, but there was hope that they would try to settle the matter with the Sultan by diplomatic means.

Devaluation in the Gulf:

2. The Gulf States had survived the decision not to go along with us in devaluing their currencies. They had had in fact little choice once the decision had been taken by Kuwait not to devalue. Bahrain which stood to be most affected, had found it politically inexpedient to devalue because of the consequent increase in the cost of imports.

Further Political Trends:

3. The Saudis had told us that they wished to open an office in Dubai. We were willing to agree to this request provided it was staffed, as the Ruler had been assured it would be, by officers of the Saudi Ministry of Education, rather than by diplomats.

CONSIDERATION OF THE RECORD OF THE MEETING OF THE PERSIAN GULF COUNTER SUBVERSION GROUP (C.S.C.(P.G.)) HELD IN BAHRAIN, 14 NOVEMBER 1967.

Persian Gulf Police Forces

4. The Chairman referred to the difficulty of setting up and paying for adequate police forces in the smaller states. The Sharjah force, in particular, was too small. Sheikh Zaid had borne the bulk of the cost so far and might be willing to put up the extra £5,000 per annum required. Group Captain Stockwell enquired whether anyone had considered the possibility of providing uniforms,rifles and other equipment required for the Ajman Umm al-Quiwain police forces out of surplus British stocks, following the evacuation of Aden. Mr. Weston said that rifles had been found from an alternative source; he did not think that the possibility of equipping the force with uniforms out of surplus stock had been gone into at the time.

5. It was agreed that Arabian Department would enquire from the Gulf exactly what the requirements of the two police forces were, and take the matter up from there with the M.O.D. if necessary.

(Action please by Arabian Department)

/Special

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Special Branches

6. The main difficulty about setting up special branches in the Trucial States was, as the Record of the Bahrain Group showed and the valuable report confirmed, that recruitment was dismally slow and co-operation between the various states difficult to achieve. A complex organisation was necessary, but a Central Bureau, which had now started to function, was obviously the right solution. The Rulers had accepted that this should be situated in the camp of the T.O.S., but it was not certain that they would continue to agree to this. It was most important that the Bureau should not appear to be functioning as a British Intelligence organisation. There was to be a conference in the Spring on security measures at which it was hoped to engage the interests of the Rulers. It was not certain, however, whether the Sultanate would be represented. In this connexion, the Chairman remarked that as a result of his recent visit, the Minister of State was pessimistic about the security position in Muscat; he was anxious to avoid a situation which might involve British military support.

7. The Chairman proposed, and the meeting agreed, that: report on Special Branches in the Gulf should be noted with gratitude.

Special Intelligence Payments and Rewards

8. The Chairman referred to a letter dated 13 November, from Miss Hare in the Ministry of Defence to Mr. Weston in Arabian Department, which had been circulated to members on 4 December. The letter sought exemption in respect of "Special Intelligence Payments and Rewards" from the 50-50 cost sharing arrangement as between the F.O. and the M.O.D. which had been agreed for the Trucial States Special Branch, on the grounds (a) that there was no appropriate subhead in the M.O.D. to which these payments could be charged, and (b) that expenditure of this nature was quite inappropriate to defence votes as the activity of the recipients of special grants was not of direct concern to the Army.

The estimate that the M.O.D. share of this expenditure might amount to £10,000 in 1967/68 was, however, unrealistic. Owing to the difficulties of recruitment, the payments in fact were likely to be very small.

The Chairman said that his view was that the 50-50 agreement should be adhered to. The M.O.D. had had

/an

an opportunity to contest this when the budget went up to O.P.D.(O) last year and they had not done so. On a point of principle, it would be quite wrong to go back on it now. Group Captain Stockwell said that he had not been briefed on this matter, but would like to look into it informally before a reply was sent to Miss Hare's letter.

(Action please by Ministry of Defence and Arabian Department.)

Immigration Control

9. The Chairman said that it was hoped to introduce air and sea patrols in January; he thought that the question of whether or not to introduce residence permits must be left to the men on the spot. It had to be admitted that the policy of retroceding responsibility to the States, which we were bound to follow, was not easy to reconcile with the demands of security.

BRITISH COUNCIL

English Teachers

10. Mr. Warren-Knott said that he could not say anything about the specific question of the Teaching College at Bahrain, but in general the position was that the Gulf, which had long been waiting in the queue, was now near the top of the list of British Council priorities, so there was a good chance of getting funds to open up in Bahrain in 1968/69. The Chairman said that a British Council presence was a long term issue; unless some progress was made soon, the requirement might no longer exist.

11. Mr. Douglas said that the O.D.M. would be able to finance 3 or 4 English language teachers next year. Although some of these would be replacing teachers about to leave there would still be a net gain. Recruiting was difficult, and the Gulf was not popular with teachers. Mr. Warren-Knott concurred. The expulsion of English teachers from Kuwait, he said, had not helped matters, but there were signs that the Kuwaitis would like some of the teachers to return. Only 8 of the 21 teachers now there, however, wanted to remain, and none of these were women. A particular difficulty in Bahrain was the extremely rigid ideas of the local education authorities on teaching methods, which were frustrating for the best kind of British teacher. The success of more enlightened methods might make the Bahrainis change their ideas, but this would require a long and difficult haul. Bahrain would like 3 or 4 teachers next year.

Language laboratory, Dubai

12. Mrs. Elwell said she was still trying to spend

the money which had been put at her disposal for a language laboratory. The difficulty was to find a site for it and a teacher to run it. Mr. Warren-Knott said that the English language school in Dubai would shortly be moving to another site. As only one room was required for the laboratory, it might be possible to expand the English school to include it. The Chairman said that it might be undesirable for the laboratory to be identified too closely as a British enterprise. It was agreed that Mrs. Elwell should continue to pursue the question of establishing a language laboratory, but that it was too soon for C.R.D. to bring to the attention of the British Council that a teacher of English would eventually be required to run it.

(Action please by I.R.D.)

Information Media

13. B.B.C. broadcasts: Mr. Pridham said that everyone agreed the Arabic Service of the B.B.C. had its shortcomings. It was not, however, possible to arrange the timing of B.B.C. broadcasts to suit everybody. The B.B.C. relied for their programmes on news agencies, their own correspondents, the ASIDE telegrams. They also received briefing from the News Departments of the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Office, but were not briefed, except for background, by the political departments. The Chairman said that the B.B.C. were perhaps over-impressed by the importance of a sophisticated audience in Cairo; they refused to use R.N.S. material, which appealed to listeners in the Gulf, on the grounds that it was too parochial. Mr. Pridham said that the arguments about shortage of news had been overstated; basically the position was that the B.B.C. had no intention of working a political miracle to suit our purpose. Group Captain Stockwell said that this reinforced the argument for supporting local stations.

14. Bahrain Radio: Mr. Douglas said that O.D.M. could find no money for this station this year. This did not preclude funds being made available from contingencies in 1968/69.

15. In discussion the following points were made. Although a 50 k.w. station was not needed for Bahrain itself, a transmitter of that power was necessary if the station was to be commercially viable; and without a 50 k.w. station the Ruler would lose heart, as he wanted a station no less powerful than that of his neighbour in Qatar. The capital cost had been estimated at £180,000, but this was probably an underestimate. In any case the cost would be more than could be found out of Counter Subversion funds or those available to Mr. Henderson.

16. It was possible that Sheikh Zaid might be persuaded to find the money and that the Ruler of

Bahrain might be prepared to ask for it once the Qatari 50 k.w. station came on the air. The meeting endorsed the importance of Radio Bahrain as a counter to Radio Cairo, and agreed that the importance attached by the Working Group to this matter should be recorded.

17. Abu Dhabi: Mr. Pridham said that the Thomson Institute had been supporting the sale of a television station to Abu Dhabi. The contract, however, was intrinsically bad, and Mr. Henderson had strongly advised the Ruler not to sign it. The advice of the Crown Agents was being sought.

Films

18. Group Captain Stockwell asked what the prospects were or producing films specially for Arab audiences. Mr. Pridham said it was contrary to H.M.G.'s policy to produce feature films, although documentary film could be made. B.P. and "World Wide" were making films about the Trucial States. A documentary on Qatar had already been produced and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi was also thinking of having a documentary made.

19. It was agreed that it was important for any films made to stress what the Rulers were doing for their people. The contribution of British aid and British engineering should not be stressed, but could be discreetly introduced.

(Action please by J.I.P.G.D. to report further)

Review of questions outstanding at the last Meeting on 19 December, 1967.

"Topping up" of expatriate Police Officers' Salaries

20. Mr. Weston reported that the matter was being looked at sympathetically but was now being treated as part of the wider question of financing the various police forces in the Gulf.

Educational Textbooks

21. Mr. Douglas said that O.D.M. were waiting to hear from C.R.D. what exactly was wanted and the quantities involved. O.D.M. could find, say, £50 for buying books if this would suit the bill. In discussion the point was made that what were wanted were "antiseptic" books in Arabic, and that these probably did not exist and might have to be specially written.

22. It was agreed that the Political Agent should be asked to prescribe the sort of books required. The British Council and Dev-Div should be consulted.

(Action

(Action please by Arabian Department, C.R.D. and O.D.M.)

Sawt-as-Sahil

23. Mr. Pridham said that two questions arose. The first concerned the operating costs of the station for 1968/69 which would amount to about £30,000 p.a., and the other concerned the capital cost of moving the station which might be £30/35,000. According to a letter (copy circulated to members) dated 24 October, from Mr. Cooper to Sir Denis Greenhill, the M.O.D. would seem to be arguing that the 50/50 split between the F.O. and the M.O.D. for T.O.S. costs should not apply to the operating costs of Sawt-as-Sahil. The M.O.D. were contending that, on the entertainment value of the station to British troops, the split should be 90% to the F.O. and 10% to the M.O.D. If this was agreed then M.O.D. thought they might be able to pay £25,000 for the capital costs of the move of the station, provided the F.O. found the balance (estimated at £5/10,000).

24. The Chairman said that the future of the T.O.S., in whose camp the Radio Station was to be located, was to be discussed by an inter-departmental Working Group; the operation of the radio station might be dealt with in that context. Any derogation of the 50/50 principle would prejudice the question. After discussion the Committee reached the following conclusions:

(a) Sawt-as-Sahil should have top priority over all the other local radio stations. A recent survey had shown that 80% of the people in the Trucial States had been listening to it at the time the survey was made. It would be technically difficult, and probably not worth the effort, to increase its present schedule from 5 to 6 hours per day. There should be no interruption in broadcasts while the station was being moved. (Mr. Pridham said that it had been agreed with M.O.D. that the move would not be delayed while the disagreement on the division of costs was being resolved.)

(b) There was no money available from the Information Vote to pay for the move;

(c) It would not be proper to earmark the whole of the probable 1968/69 Foreign Office Counter Subversion Fund to meet the capital cost of the move; but on the understanding that as much as possible of the F.O. contribution could be paid before the end of the current financial year, up to £10,000 could, provided Sir Denis Greenhill agreed, be set aside from the Foreign Office Counter Subversion Fund for this purpose.

(Action please Arabian Department and I.R.D. and to report further).

/(Note

(Note by the Secretaries)

25. A note by the Overseas Labour Adviser on "Some Recent Developments in Labour Affairs in the Middle East" is attached at Annex.

(S... Lockhart) and (F.T. Copeland)
Joint Secretaries, Counter Subversion Committee.
15 December, 1967.

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ANNEX

SOME RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN LABOUR AFFAIRS IN THE MIDDLE EAST
NOTE BY OVERSEAS LABOUR ADVISER.

1. On the invitation respectively of the Lebanese Trade Union Federation and the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions, Mr. Frank Cousins of the Transport and General Workers Union and Mr. Fred Hayday of the National Union of General and Municipal Workers (who is also Chairman of the TUC International Department) will be visiting The Lebanon and Jordan for the period 10-17 December as representatives of the British TUC General Council. This balances a visit they paid to Israel in August, and is part of a move to renew links with Arab trade unions and generally to mend fences in the area. It may be followed in 1968 by a visit to the UAR, for which an invitation has already been received. But on this occasion they are not hoping to do more than achieve an understanding on the structure and strength of the local trade union movements and to re-establish friendly relations.

2. The Overseas Labour Consultative Committee will discuss at its second meeting on 2 February, 1968 a paper on "Labour and Trade Unions in the Arab States of the Middle East". The paper will include labour affairs in the Persian Gulf states, and Messrs. Cousins and Hayday are expected to lead the discussion, together with Mr. Jack Lee of Shell International.

3. The Third Conference of Arab Ministers of Labour was due to be held in Kuwait during 28 November - 2 December. Its agenda was to include the formation of an Arab bloc in the PLO as a general pressure group there, "The question of employment of foreigners ... as a result of the recent tripartite aggression", and "Replacement of British, US, and West German technicians and experts as well as those of any country supporting aggression ...".
The Embassy in Kuwait will be supplying a report of the conference, and this may include material which could be of interest to the Group at a subsequent meeting.

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J 326/1

12th December, 1967

THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

164

In response to your letter (JICM 198) dated 20th November, 1967, JIC Departments were asked whether the reopening of the above post could be justified on intelligence grounds.

The DIS put forward a strong case for the re-establishment of the Consulate General and made the following points:

(a) although the Iraqi threat to Kuwait is minimal at present, this situation may well change;

(b) Basra is the natural centre from which insurgency training and arms deliveries to the Gulf states can originate;

(c) Basra is one of the few points of entry of Soviet arms and military equipment into Iraq;

(d) Basra is the HQ of the Iraqi Navy which is due for rapid expansion (including the acquisition of mines and Komar FPBGMs) in the next year or two.

The JIC at their meeting on 7th December, (JIC(67) 54th Meeting, Minute 4 refers), discussed the matter and endorsed the DIS view that the reopening of the post at Basra as an intelligence collection centre was important, particularly when seen in the context of our clear military commitment to Kuwait and possible threats to our position in the Persian Gulf. The further point was made that in the past the Consulate General had provided a valuable de visu reporting service and that some of the intelligence targets in which Departments were interested could only be covered adequately by a man on the spot.

I should be grateful if you would convey the views of the JIC to the D.S.A.O.

F. B. Richards

(F.B. RICHARDS)

H.J.H Maud, Esq.,
Permanent Under Secretary's Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX
TO
JIC(67) 54TH MEETING HELD ON
THURSDAY, 7TH DECEMBER, 1967

4. CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

The Committee had before them JIC(67)(SEC)339 which had circulated the reply by the Defence Intelligence Staff to a Foreign Office request for Departments' views on whether the reopening of the Consulate General at Basra would be justified because of its importance as a source of intelligence.

The CHAIRMAN said that although the reopening of this Post would involve substantial expenditure, the matter should be looked at in the context of our clear military commitment to Kuwait. He thought that it would be unwise to ignore any opportunity of collecting intelligence relevant to this commitment.

The case for the reopening of Basra must therefore turn on the requirement for local de visu intelligence. There was, however, general support in the Committee for the Defence Intelligence Staff's judgement that the previous Consulate General had provided useful coverage of the latter type on the targets mentioned in their letter and for the view that both types of coverage were now required. While Basra was not, as the letter from the DIS contended, the only centre from which insurgency training and arms deliveries could originate, it would in future be a natural source of

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intelligence of threats to our position in the Gulf. The proposal that the post be reopened was, therefore, one which the Committee would wish to endorse.

The Committee -

Instructed the Secretary to arrange for their views on this matter to be conveyed to the D.S.A.O.

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.

11th December, 1967

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Would you let Mr. Hooper know if this can be done.

326/1.

Mr. Hooper informed. MEG 8/12

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Canadian Ambassador to Iran.

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JIC(67)(SEC) 339

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6th December 1967

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JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

326/1

168/1

THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA
(Previous Reference: JIC(67)(SEC) 314)

The text of a letter (JICM 198) from the Foreign Office (PUSD) to the Secretary, JIC, was recently circulated as an Annex to JIC(67)(SEC) 314. The letter asked Departments whether the reopening of a Consulate General at Basra could be justified on intelligence grounds alone as a unique potential source of information on particular problem areas.

2. In response to the Foreign Office letter the Defence Intelligence Staff has made out a strong case for the re-establishment of the post. A copy of the DIS reply (DI4/114/COORD) is attached at Annex for the information of other Departments, together with a copy of the Foreign Office letter (JICM 198) for convenience.

3. I suggest the Committee may wish to discuss this question as an Unforeseen Matter at their meeting on 7th December 1967 and consider the endorsement of the views expressed by the DIS.

(Signed) F.B. RICHARDS
Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.
6th December 1967

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Annex 1 to JIC(67)(SEC) 339

TEXT OF A LETTER, DATED 28th NOVEMBER, FROM DIS TO THE SECRETARY, JIC

"THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

Reference: JIC(67)(SEC) 314 dated 22nd November 1967.

1. We recommend that a strong case should be made for the re-establishment of the above post for the following reasons:

a. Although the Iraqi threat to Kuwait is minimal at present, this situation may well change.

b. Basra is the natural and only centre from which insurgency training and arms deliveries to the Gulf States can originate.

c. Basra is one of the few points of entry of Soviet arms and military equipment into Iraq.

d. Basra is the HQ of the Iraqi Navy which is due for rapid expansion (including the acquisition of mines and Komar FPBGMs) in the next year or two.

2. The previous Consul General at Basra was successful in providing much useful information on these subjects."

Annex 2 to JIC(67)(SEC) 339

TEXT OF A LETTER (JICM 198), DATED 20th NOVEMBER 1967, FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE (PUSD) TO THE SECRETARY, JIC

Consulate-General at Basra

"The DSAO are at present considering whether this post should be re-opened after the resumption of diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq.

2. When the status of the post was considered in 1966 its closure was resisted on the grounds of its importance as a reporting centre, particularly on Iraqi intentions towards Kuwait.

3. DSAO do not consider that the re-opening of the post would be justified for purely diplomatic service purposes. Before making a decision to keep the post closed they would like confirmation however that there is still a potential Iraqi threat to Kuwait

4. Paragraph 15 of JIC(67) 53 answers the first part of the question ("The Iraqi threat to Kuwait must.....be regarded as continuing"). Could the latter part please be brought to the Committee's attention?."

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JIG (GULF) 1/67

30 November 1967

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J. I. C. (A)

ASSESSMENT TO THE SECURITY THREAT
MASIRAH AS AT 31ST OCTOBER 1967

1. Copies are enclosed of JIG (Gulf) 1/67 dated 28 Nov 67 which examines the threat to the security of British interests on Masirah Island as at 31 Oct 67.

2. Consulate General Muscat has been asked to clarify whether the Sultan has imposed a ban on the construction of a perimeter fence (see last sentence of para 10).

3. JIS (Gulf) is examining whether periodic visits by a DIO can be arranged (see last sentence of para 24).

(R.E. FISHER)
Major
Secretary

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JIG (Gulf) 1/67 Copy No 3 of 12

ASSESSMENT OF THE SECURITY THREAT MASIRAH AS AT 31ST OCTOBER 1967

Aim

1. The aim of this paper is to assess the threat to the security of British interests on Masirah Island as at 31st October 1967.

Description of Masirah Island

2. Masirah Island is approximately 40 miles long by 8 miles wide at its widest part. Rocky broken country running from Northeast to Southwest forms the main feature of the island, averaging 400 feet in height and reaching 700 feet at the highest point. Vegetation is sparse and there is only scattered scrub in wadi bottoms. The northern end of the island, on which the RAF airfield is situated, is generally a flat gravel plain.

3. The airfield was originally constructed in 1942 and used by the RAF and the USAF as a staging post mainly on the route from Aden to Karachi. Since the war it has continued to serve the RAF in that capacity, and construction was undertaken in 1961 to develop and improve it both as a staging post and as an operational base. Currently work is in hand to extend the runway.

4. Heavy seas make the island difficult to approach during the monsoon and the shipping season for all heavy supplies is restricted to the period from October to April. Ships anchor offshore and supplies are transferred by small craft under control of RCT to a small jetty at the northwest tip of the island. Oil products are discharged from tankers at mooring buoys close inshore through submarine pipelines to a tank farm near the jetty.

5. A Diplomatic Wireless Relay Station (DWS) is under construction to the north of the airfield and should be completed by about August 1968.

6. The local population comprises less than 2000 people concentrated in two settlements close to the airfield: the "Wali Camp", mainly inhabited by migrants from the mainland of Muscat and Oman, with a sprinkling of Baluchis; and the smaller "Bedu Camp", where the true Masirans live. Additionally, migrants from the mainland, of the order of 200 to 300, establish temporary fishing encampments in the south of the island during the non-monsoon period October to April.

7. The local population provide a pool of unskilled labour for RAF, MPBW and the two contractors, Costains and the Costrabian Company. Costains are engaged in extensions to the runway which should be completed in January 1968 and the Constrabian Company are about to start the construction of the DWS. There is a small force of expatriate non-European labourers, imported to undertake skilled work, who live in special camps on or near the airfield. A table showing the numbers and type of staff employed on various tasks, is attached at Annex A.

/British

British Interests

8. RAF MASIRAH. RAF Masirah is a staging post under command of Commander Air Forces Gulf and lies on the reinforcement route to the Far East for V-bombers, fighters using in-flight refuelling, and strategic transport aircraft. In the long term it is seen to have a continued important staging post function, and in the mid-seventies is planned to be a base for Phantom and Maritime aircraft to operate in the shipping protection role.

9. DWS. The DWS replaces the former relay station on Perim Island and is intended to improve the reception of BBC programmes in the Arab world and in south and Central Asia. Initially it will relay programmes on medium wave in Arabic and eventually on shortwave in other languages. The transmitter and vulnerable installations will be contained in a secure compound.

Political Stability

10. RAF Masirah and the DWS are sited on land leased from the Sultan in return for an annual rent. The Sultan and his local officials (Sheikh Khamis and the Wali, Abdul Rahman Sanyak, a Baluchi) offer every assistance in maintaining good relations between the British and the local population and in ensuring the smooth working of the airfield. The attitude of the Sultan to the British presence is the main safeguard to the security of British interests. Any change of rule in Muscat and Oman, which resulted in a government less sympathetic to British interests, might undermine the whole basis of the British position and could lead to a major security problem; although security fences have been erected around certain important installations, there is no fence round the airfield as a whole and the local population have easy access. (It is understood that the Sultan has forbidden the construction of a perimeter fence although no specific prohibition of such a fence appears to have been written into the original agreement for the base).

Local Population

11. Although the local population are kept well in hand by the Sultan's representatives and industrial relations are generally good, there was a strike in May 1967. The strikers had some justification for their action since RAF and MPBW had not implemented an increase in pay which had been agreed in principle by the Sultan the previous October. Some sixteen ringleaders emerged during the strike. These men managed to usurp the authority normally exercised by the Sultan's representatives. This state of affairs was brought to an end by the arrival from Muscat of a representation of the Minister of the Interior. The sixteen were suspended for six months. Most have since left the island to find employment on the mainland and the remainder will be re-employed on 1 November 1967.

/12. Since

12. Since the local population depend on the British for their livelihood and certain essentials such as fresh water, self-interest and common sense should inhibit anti-British activities. But reason does not always prevail in times of industrial or political strife. Some minor damage was done to a valve on a water installation during the May strike; however, once the folly of this act had been pointed out to the strikers, there were no other incidents of this nature. At present, major industrial disputes leading to serious malicious damage would appear to be unlikely.

13. Labour on the island could become a priority target for externally-inspired subversion, especially when the British withdrawal from South Arabia narrows the choice of location for anti-British action; but, so long as the local government remains firm, troublemakers would probably be identified quickly and expelled from the island.

14. The local population appear to be loyal to the Sultan and would probably detect and report any strangers who might land on the island intent on sabotage, unless any potential saboteur carried out his task quickly.

Expatriate Labour

15. Pakistanis are imported for skilled work and there are currently about 170 on the island. There is no history or evidence of subversion or discontent among these people. They are recruited in Pakistan where certain checks are carried out by the Pakistani emigration authorities to weed out undesirables. Although there appears to be no way in which the British authorities could undertake vetting, the Pakistani check appears so far to be effective.

16. The Constrabian Company had intended to import nine Adenis for skilled work in constructing the DWS, however it has been decided that no South Arabians should be admitted to the island.

National Movements in the Sultanate

17. There is no evidence that the various nationalist and subversive movements, discussed in the following paragraphs have any immediate plans to operate against Masirah. Their efforts appear to be directed primarily against the Sultan's rule. But there is a constant flood of propaganda against the British position in the Sultanate, emanating mainly from Cairo Radio, and if these movements were to become more active, or more successful, Masirah would become an obvious target for anti-British activity. Broadly speaking there are four movements which oppose the Sultan.

18. The Dhofari Liberation Front The hard core of this movement probably numbers between 60 and 100 guerrillas who operate in the mountains in Dhofar. They have been less active in recent months and the Sultan's Armed Forces have an effective programme of operations against them. But they remain in being. They have the support of Cairo Radio. They have the sympathy of the people of Dhofar.

/They

They have links with the people of the East Aden Protectorate and with the N.L.F. The change in regime in the East Aden Protectorate looks like transforming their ability to obtain supplies of arms, food and reinforcements. They continue to be well placed to achieve the assassination of the Sultan by suborning servants in the palace.

19. The Imamate. This movement came into opposition to the Sultan some 12 years ago with the declared aim of separating central Oman from the Sultanate. It then had the backing of tribesmen in central Oman, and also the support of Arab Governments. It now has comparatively little support in Oman, but continues to have the support of Afro-Asian and Communist bloc governments.

20. Sayed Tariq. He is the half brother of the Sultan and aims to replace his autocracy with a somewhat more democratic constitution. His support lies mainly among the educated Omanis often outside the Sultanate. He also has support on the Batinah Coast. If the Sultan were overthrown it would not follow automatically that Tariq would emerge as the accepted leader of the country. The leaders in the interior and the people in Dhofar might well oppose him.

21. The Arab Nationalist Movement. This is at the moment a nebulous movement of ideas rather than actions which has few adherents in the Oman and Muscat regions. However, if the Egyptian Intelligence Service wished to mount operations against the Sultanate, this movement, the Dhofar Liberation Front and the younger and more extreme of Sayed Tariq's followers, would be the tools which they would pick up.

22. Taking the four movements as a whole, it can be said that currently the most dangerous is the Dhofar Liberation Front. It, the Imamate and the Arab Nationalist Movement primarily oppose the Sultan, but also oppose the British presence in the Sultanate. If the Sultan were overthrown, then each of these movements would throw its weight against our continued presence. By contrast, Sayed Tariq is comparatively anglophile and if he came to power he might well leave the British presence undisturbed at least so long as he needed our help. Thereafter, he might change his attitude.

Possibility of Sabotage Mounted from Outside the Island.

23. Sabotage attempts could be launched either by mounting a special operation from outside or by infiltrating the local population. Although a landing would be easier in the non-monsoon period, it would be unwise to assume that landings could take place only between October and April. Once a sabotage party had landed it is difficult to estimate how long it could remain undetected, but possibly it could stay in the southern part of the Island for up to a week, whereas its presence in the vicinity of the airfield would be unlikely to remain concealed for much longer than twenty four hours. In the worst case, a well -

/trained

trained and well-briefed sabotage party could land by night, carry out its task, and withdraw, in the short space of one night; the installations on the airfield are widely dispersed and, in the absence of a perimeter fence and a strong security guard, the airfield is wide open to this type of operation. Fortunately, so far, the subversive organisations have shown no evidence of possessing the sophisticated capability that this type of operation would entail.

24. A less direct approach is open to saboteurs; they could land on the Island openly, ostensibly as migrant workers, and unless they were well known trouble-makers or indulged in subversive talk, their intent could remain undetected indefinitely until the moment came to strike. It would be fairly simple to land and conceal a clandestine cache of arms and explosives. There is no means of vetting migrant workers and no positive check against infiltration; the only safeguard is the local knowledge of the Sultan's representatives which, since this is a small community, has been effective so far in identifying troublemakers. Periodic visits by a DIO might reinforce this safeguard and provide early warning of any changes in local attitudes.

Conclusions

25. There is no evidence of subversion among the local population but they could become a target for external nationalist organisations after the British withdrawal from Aden. Relations are generally good but minor malicious damage could be attempted if there were an industrial dispute.

26. Subversion among the Pakistani expatriate workers is unlikely.

27. Nationalist Movements in the Sultanate are directed primarily against the Sultan's rule. But as indicated above, three of them are also anti-British. While there is no indication that any of them at present have their sights set on Masirah yet in the long term sabotage by their members is a potential threat.

28. The attitude of the Sultan to the British presence is the main safeguard to the security of British interests. So long as he remains firmly in power, the security threat is probably small. Any change which brought about a government antipathetic to the United Kingdom could undermine the whole basis of the British position on Masirah.

BAHRAIN
28 November 1967

Annex: A. Staff Employed on Masirah Island.
B. Map.

ANNEX A TO
JIG(GULF) 1/67
DATED 25 NOV 67

STAFF EMPLOYED AT MASIRAH

RAF Masirah

1. RAF.

a.	RAF personnel	270
b.	Locals	104

2. MPBW.

a.	Europeans	20
b.	Pakistanis (living on airfield)	134
c.	Locals	164

3. Costains (constructing runway, finish Jan 68).

a.	Europeans	7
b.	Pakistanis (living in special camp)	32
c.	Locals	29

DWS

4. Contractor Constrabian Company.

a.	Expatriate	14 or 15
b.	Locals	100

5. DWS (approximate strength when working).

a.	Europeans	20
b.	Expatriate Pakistani or Indian Moslem	25

SECURITY THREAT TO BRITISH INTERESTS IN MUSCAT [illegible]

TANK FARM

JETTY

DHS

EXPLOSIVES STORAGE AREA

COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE

HOSTAIN EXPATRIATE CAMP

WATER DISTILLATION PLANT

EXPATRIATE LABOUR

WALI CAMP

RSOI CAMP



SECRET

ROYAL AIR FORCE. CROWN COPYRIGHT
IRAQ.
PLEASE QUOTE
NEG No. 3L/2[illegible]
DATE [illegible]

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JIC(67)(SEC) 314

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22nd November 1967

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CABINET

JOINT INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE

326/1.

168/1.

THE CONSULATE GENERAL AT BASRA

164.

I attach at Annex the text of a letter (JICM 198) from the Foreign Office (PUSD) to the Secretary, JIC asking for the views of JIC Departments on the future need for a Consulate General at Basra.

2. Departments are invited to consider whether the reopeneing of this post can be justified on intelligence grounds as a unique potential source of information on particular problem areas.

3. Departments should pass their comments to the Secretary, JIC by 5.00 p.m. on THURSDAY, 30th NOVEMBER. If judged necessary an Ad Hoc Meeting will be called at a later stage to discuss the matter in more detail.

(Signed) D.J. FEWTRELL

for Secretary,
Joint Intelligence Committee

Cabinet Office, S.W.1.
22nd November 1967

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Annex to JIC(67)(SEC) 314

TEXT OF A LETTER (JICM 198), DATED 20th NOVEMBER 1967, FROM THE FOREIGN OFFICE (PUSD) TO THE SECRETARY, JIC:

Consulate-General at Basra

"The DSAO are at present considering whether this post should be re-opened after the resumption of diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq.

2. When the status of the post was considered in 1966 its closure was resisted on the grounds of its importance as a reporting centre, particularly on Iraqi intentions towards Kuwait.

3. DSAO do not consider that the re-opening of the post would be justified for purely diplomatic service purposes. Before making a decision to keep the post closed they would like confirmation however that there is still a potential Iraqi threat to Kuwait

:

4. Paragraph 15 of JIC(67) 53 answers the first part of the question ("The Iraqi threat to Kuwait must.....be regarded as continuing"). Could the latter part please be brought to the Committee's attention?"

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TOP SECRET

164

FOREIGN OFFICE,

S.W.1.

(JICM 198)

1 (A) 326/1. 20 November 1967

Dear Brooks,

Consulate-General at Basra

The DSAO are at present considering whether this post should be re-opened after the resumption of diplomatic relations between HMG and Iraq.

2. When the status of the post was considered in 1966 its closure was resisted on the grounds of its importance as a reporting centre, particularly on Iraqi intentions towards Kuwait.

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-

156.

4. Paragraph 15 of JIC(67)53 answers the first part of the question ("The Iraqi threat to Kuwait must.....be regarded as continuing"). Could the latter part please be brought to the Committee's attention?

Yes TBR 21/XI Yours ever

Agreed. Please draft. Humphrey

(H.J.H. Maud)

JIC Reg.

F. Brooks Richards, Esq., CMG, DSC,
Secretary JIC,
Cabinet Office.

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E.P.

SECRET

157

J 326/1

Sir Burke Trend

MR GRUFFYDD JONES

156.

I attach Sir Burke Trend's copy of the Joint Intelligence Committee's report on "Britain and the Persian Gulf - the next six months", (JIC(67)53 (Final)).

The report describes Britain's position in the Gulf following the Arab-Israel war and the collapse of the Federal Government in South Arabia. The report examines the attitudes of the Gulf rulers and considers possible threats to their authority. The conclusion is reached that, in the short period reviewed, no major threat to either Britain's position or that of the local rulers is likely to occur.

I recommend that I be authorised to pass this report to the Prime Minister, and to the Foreign, Defence and Commonwealth Secretaries, and Minister of Power.

Brooks Richards.

(F.B. RICHARDS)

Mr Richards
1 a.m.

30th October, 1967

EO mb. 1/11

JIC Reg.

Actioned 1/11/67 1/11

CM
pp. clerks.

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